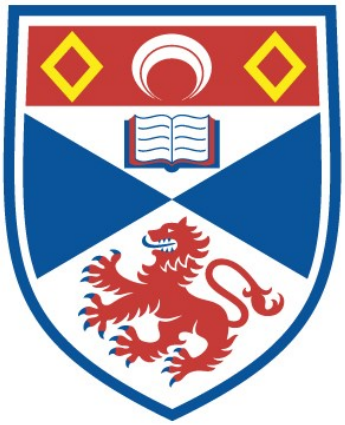
BEYOND FIXITY AND FREEDOM : MAINSTREAM PROTESTANTISM'S RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIETY IN NORTH AMERICA : FROM IDENTIFICATION TO DIFFERENTIATION

Daniel W. Age

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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BEYOND FIXITY AND FREEDOM

Mainstream Protestantism's Relationship to Society in North America:

From Identification to Differentiation

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Divinity

St. Mary's College

University of St. Andrews

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THESIS ABSTRACT

The Thesis argues the following:

(1) Mainstream Protestant constituencies in the USA in this century have been problematically identified with the modern socio-cultural world organized around liberal values.

(2) This has been manifested by (A) attempts to integrate Christianity into modern society on terms fundamentally in harmony with the principles of modernity; (B) attempts to employ Christian values to regulate society – attempts which are in tension with the underlying principles of ethos of modernity.

(3) The thesis discovers the theological and historical roots of these patterns and points out the flaws in two movements that emerged in reaction to these patterns.

(4) In a final chapter, the thesis accesses select theoretical resources which demonstrate the importance and basis of Christianity sustaining a differentiated relationship to society. In the conclusion, the gains derived from this theoretical inquiry are returned to the historical problem analyzed in the body of the dissertation.

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BEYOND FIXITY AND FREEDOM

FIXITY AND FREEDOM

This dissertation evolved out of my experiences in Washington, D.C., where I was directly confronted with the cultural and political battles between the Religious Right and the defenders of the liberal tradition. In 1988, while representing Colgate Rochester Divinity School in a conference on the subject of the First Amendment and the separation of church and state, and again in 1994 and 1995, while working on Capitol Hill as an archivist for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, I was forced to give attention to the heated polemic occurring between right and left religious constituencies. The Right argued that America was on the brink of moral ruin because it had removed God, the Christian religion and Biblical morality from the public domain. They insisted that a liberal interpretation and practice of the First Amendment and individual liberties that had no basis in the Constitution, judicial prerogative or America's "Christian" founding, had opened the door to socio-moral anomie, runaway pluralism and secularism. So-called liberals from both secular and religious origins passionately countered these claims, insisting that individual liberty, pluralism and the proper secularization of public life were among the great values and contributions of democratic government to modern social development. They accused the Religious Right of historical revisionism, moral absolutism, attempting to manipulate democratic power and undermining individual liberty. Most importantly, the left passionately defended the social value and integrity of American freedom with its commitment to equality, pluralism and secularization.

From the beginning, I was convinced that the terms of debate created more heat than light. Both parties were locked in a polemic that had led them into a corner. The Right's anxiety over the changing moral complexion of society had led them into a campaign which ended up justifying the circumscription of individual and minority rights and liberties, inordinately intensifying traditional claims about Biblical authority, identifying Christianity with moral absolutism and construing America's Founding Statesmen and the Republic itself as Christian in classical orthodox terms. I began to think that these positions resulted more from being too closely identified to America as a socio-national entity than faithfulness to Christian beliefs or the Founders' republican premises.

Likewise, the more liberal constituency seemed to me to be blind in the face of

the facts. They dismissed the idea that the socio-moral fabric of American society was under any inordinate stress except for the economic imbalances to which they had traditionally drawn attention. They never questioned the social integrity of the liberal principles and ethos that underpinned the modern state. Not only the Religious Right, but some post-modern theorists and cultural analysts were saying that modernity had reached a socio-moral crisis.[1] I suspected that the Religious Left and Right, both of which had their origin and center in mainstream Protestant constituencies, were alike too closely identified with an image of the United States as a model leader of societies organized around freedom.

The research commenced from these initial reflections and progressed to a search for the historical evidence and sources of mainstream Protestantism's identification with America, as it was expressed in these two right-left polarities. The work, however, was never intended to be only an inquiry into American mainstream Protestantism's relationship to its world. While I was interested in this specific *historical question*, I was also interested in a more general *theoretical question*, having to do with the nature of Christianity's relationship to the world. For this, I turned to select theological, biblical and sociological sources. The thesis evolved out of my interaction with these two references, the theoretical and historical, and slowly took on its present form. As the Table of Contents indicates, this form is that of a historical description and analysis of mainstream Protestantism's close identification with America, interpreted through a new paradigm - "fixity" and "freedom." This is followed by a theoretical discussion which calls into question relationships which lack differentiation. Sociological resources are explored in order to demonstrate that the essential key to a proper connection between one body and another is not identification, but differentiation and that this is a fundamental truth which is generally applicable to all relationships. Biblical and theological studies are employed to show how differentiation is the critical challenge in Christianity's relationship to the world.

By moving from the historical to a strictly theoretical enquiry, the intent has been to create a framework which would allow mainstream Protestantism in the United States to be viewed in the larger context of this challenge of differentiation.

Rather than allow myself to be mired in a highly polarized right-left debate, I have attempted to *discover* a larger historical and sociological framework for

understanding this struggle as well as the deeper theological issues at stake. In fact, the approach taken in this study goes beyond the above description. The "new" framework I believe fundamentally alters the terms of the debate and the scope of the parties involved. By identifying the patterns of "fixity" and "freedom," the aim of the study is to open a new understanding of, and appreciation for, the challenge that faces American Protestant churches and their relationship to the modern world.

The common approach to the right-left polemic has been over liberal versus conservative interpretations of the biblical authority and the Constitution (with the Bill of Rights). Included in this polemic were arguments over the American Founders' principles -- whether these principles were Christian or secular. The approach taken in this study to the Right-Left polemic is different. It is not first and foremost a question of the correctness of either the Right's or the Left's positions that is the crucial issue. Rather, it is the historic relationship that Protestantism formed with nascent and modern America that is primary. It is this relationship and the various forces that have influenced it that is the focus of my enquiry. These forces include historical developments in the American experience going as far back to the early colonial period; the problems, pressures and temptations endemic to the socio-political construction of the United States; the forces behind doctrinal revisions and the effect these have had and the social "role" these revisions played in influencing Protestantism's relation to their new world.

By approaching the problem in this manner, the religio-cultural right is viewed alongside the left. The two are shown to be variant expressions of a common problem. They are siblings of an earlier union between Protestantism and a developing republic. No doubt this analysis will be passionately resisted by both parties who would find the idea scandalous.

The dissertation argues the following thesis: *(1) that mainstream American Protestant constituencies in this century have been too closely identified with the United States as a socio-cultural entity; (2) that the roots and formation of this identity can be traced back to theological developments and historical precedents in the colonial and antebellum periods; (3) that this identification has been primarily manifested in two dynamics that are in logical tension, "fixity" and "freedom," which are endemic to the modern social order; and (4) that this judgement "too closely identified," while argued from an historical analysis, ultimately rests on positive*

criteria derived from an understanding of the dialectical character of the Christian gospel [and other sources] which requires and empowers the church's differentiation from its world while remaining connected to it.

The Framework for Understanding "Fixity" & "Freedom"

The relationship of a Christian body with the greater socio-cultural world may be characterized as moving in one of three directions. It may move away from the world, becoming insular and separate. It may move toward it, so as to become increasingly attached and identified with it. Or it may move into a creative tension with the world, seeking to remain connected to it, without surrendering its distinct character.

My historical research demonstrates that much of mainstream Protestantism in America falls into the second category. This has been primarily manifested by the presence of two dynamics which may be described as regulative and integrative. The regulative dynamic aims at control and relies on "absolute" references of authority that are external to the individual and the group. Control is a boundary issue. It betrays problematic identification. In a fully developed liberal society, control requires more subtle manipulations of power. The integrative dynamic aims at explicit compatibility; socio-cultural involvement on terms fundamentally in harmony with modernity's principles. As will be shown, both strategies have a soteriological aim and both are explicitly complementary.

Over the span of North America's colonial and republican history, there has existed within mainstream Protestant constituencies the propensity to control the greater social world around them. These Protestant groups refused to suffer the presence of religio-moral difference or at least, too great a difference. As a dynamic, control is employed to reduce or eliminate another's difference. Control requires the exertion of leverage and coercion to achieve outward unity.

Not surprisingly, Protestant constituencies in America's colonial and republican history, not only exerted efforts to ensure that the greater socio-cultural world remain like them, but they also strained to become like the emerging new world, increasingly adopting its principles, ethos and vision, so much so that their own essential difference began to erode. As will be discussed, at the time of the birth of the nation, a fledgling mainstream Protestant coalition explicitly attempted to

integrate its religion into the new social world on terms fundamentally compatible with this new world. The use of the term 'integrate' approximates Ernst Troeltsch's description of "ascetic Protestantism's" social philosophy. Summarizing his two volume study on the social teaching of the Christian Churches, Troeltsch concludes that ascetic Protestantism created the major social strategy for Christianity in the modern period. Rather than attempting to establish the rule of Christ over society through ecclesiastical prerogative supported by political power or appealing to religio-moral absolutes external to the individual or group it employed "... a rational method, controlled by the ruling idea of religion."[2] In principle, Troeltsch notes, Protestantism was compatible with democracy, liberalism and freedom of the individual.[3] By its intrinsic religious make-up and historical activity, Protestantism supported the development of these modern values and institutions. But this support was accompanied by Protestantism's social philosophy, which was to integrate into the new socio-cultural world their religious moral values so as to... "neutralize the ethically dangerous consequences of modern life."[4] This religious provision, Troeltsch observed, included the "responsibility of the individual"... "the duty of love" [toward individuals and community]... "taboo on luxury, mammon and love of pleasure" and "heroism in serving the cause of Christ..."[5] Despite the achievement of this social strategy, Troeltsch's judgement is that the day of this approach is past. Its force and effectiveness is spent.[6]

While not questioning the good that has come from this social engagement, considered from the standpoint of this thesis, there is an inherent problem with this strategy. It is explicitly built on Protestantism's attachment to, and close identity with, the new world order. It arises out of a fundamental belief in this order and its historical importance. As such, Protestantism most willingly brought its Christian jewels to the project of building the new secular temple; treasures such as its Christian values, beliefs, morals and ethic of service. Having repented of Erastinian and Constantinian monopolistic views, Protestantism envisioned a new kind of Christian universalism accomplished through the simple *transportation* and integration of its ethic and values into the new secular order.

Although far more critical in his assessment, H. Richard Niebuhr makes a similar claim about American Protestantism's relation to the developing new world. In time, Niebuhr writes, Protestantism began to position itself as "the protector of the

social mores. Its revivals tended to become instruments for the enforcing of the prevailing standards."[7] This relation to society which may rightly be viewed as complementary and integral to the new order is seen, for instance, in Protestantism's identification with the temperance cause. Niebuhr perceptively observes "as it became increasingly clear how perilous the use of liquor was in democratic and industrial society, the revival was used especially to combat this evil."[8] The chief concern of Protestantism at this stage, Niebuhr noted, was religion. It expended much of its energy in efforts to protect the validity of religion in a scientific democratic world and it "sought to prove its usefulness in promoting the dominant purposes of the age." "With greater or less success, it [Protestantism] performed the function which every institutional religion must perform in society, transmitting the best of mores... improving the morale of men in their hard struggle with themselves and others."[9] In this social engagement of Protestantism, "It was not God who ruled but religion ruled a little and religion needed God for its support."[10]

As a result of this integrative social strategy, Protestantism assimilated into itself the secular premises and ethos of the modern world. Of course, social entities that share common space will always experience levels of mutual assimilation. But there is assimilation that threatens and weakens a particular body's *essential difference.*

During the nineteenth century, the propensity to employ Christian religion to regulate the new republic as well as the propensity to integrate the Christian religion into the republic's premises and goals, characterized the same constituencies within mainstream Protestantism. Only in the twentieth century did these two divide. On the one side, Protestantism's conformity with its world deepened so that its agreement with the underlying premises and ethos of the modern state became substantive. On the other side, there was resistance to the *full* logic and premises of modernity which eventually gave rise to a new concerted effort to exert a measure of control over modern society.

The preceding discussion of identity manifested in efforts toward integration and regulation over against differentiation, points to the underlying structure of the dissertation. But in order to develop and more finely nuance the meaning inferred in the terms regulative and integrative, I have employed two terms to stand in their place: "fixity" and "freedom." The following explains my rationale for this choice.

Fixity and Freedom Defined

After the Revolution, non-sectarian Protestants participated with other Protestant groups that were gaining widespread recognition to reconstruct Christianity's role and relation to the new republican society. "Fixity" and "freedom" are organizing terms which embody contrary aspects of this new role and relation to society. As will be demonstrated, the terms were chosen because they embody the essence of the new points of contact with the modern world which Christianity was intended to sustain; a connection which was conceived as complementary and necessary, modernity being what it was. It is in this idea of disclosing a point of contact, that my purpose in selecting these terms becomes clear.

The employment of any term to describe a particular phenomenon carries with it an interpretive bias. As will be discussed, "fixity and freedom" envelop the idea that the connection which Christianity is to have with society is tailored to modernity's needs and principles. Christianity is explicitly shaped so as to be relevant and complementary to a new kind of social order. As will be discussed, from the beginning of the nation, the dominant evangelical Protestant groups became invested in the success and integrity of the new social order.[11] As such, their basic relationship to society took on an explicit complementary form. This shape reflected the extent of their identity with the new social-national project.

"Freedom"

Before defining what is meant by "freedom," when I use the term in the context of the thesis paradigm, it is first necessary to review a common meaning of freedom which is germane to American and western democracies; one from which my special usage is drawn. Freedom means to order one's life according to the dictates of one's own will, interests and conscience. It is "a condition which fulfills a man by fact of being the very essence of his existence as himself, not a creature or puppet of others."[12] The historical root of the meaning of freedom in the American experience is primarily derived from the liberal ideology that came to prominence in the wake of the Revolution. The colonist ultimately concluded that they were at the mercy and will of a parliament which exercised power over them, denying them equal representation in the matters that pertained to them. Contextually speaking, the idea of freedom in America was born with the interpretation that this power, which controlled the

colonists' interests, must be challenged and reformed so as to be placed under their own management. Self-determination and autonomy are terms that express the essence of the meaning of freedom in this setting.

As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, the American experience of freedom depended on Enlightenment ideas. Relying on Enlightenment thinkers, the Founding Fathers were able to legitimize and interpret their new freedom. The following five statements summarize the Founder's liberal assumptions: (1) Freedom is an individual right. It is not the grant of political powers, but an endowment of God and nature. (2) A central corollary of freedom is that persons have the capacity to guide, restrain and correct themselves using their own faculty of reason and experience. Likewise, the collective dividends of rational and empirical knowledge are available to guide the community and solve its social problems. Men like Jefferson and Madison no doubt subscribed to Kant's classic definition of Enlightenment. "Enlightenment," Kant said, "is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another... Have courage to use your own reason! This is the motto of Enlightenment."[13] Understood in this way, freedom leads to a shift in the locus of authority from official, traditional and transcendent sources to sources inherent in the human community and individual.

(3) The enjoyment of freedom in society is commensurate with the prevalence of virtue. In a republic, all are able to learn and practice virtue; liberal republican governance requires it. (4) The concomitant of freedom is a plurality of ideas, religions, customs and people. This pluralism, rather than fracturing society's cultural cohesion, is the matrix for a corrective dialectical environment which creates a new unity. A democratic fraternity resulting from shared republican citizenship holds together the differences endemic to a liberal social structure.

(5) When viewed in light of the preceding philosophical assumptions freedom has implied in it a degree of dynamism or movement. People liberated from hierarchical arrangements create a new arrangement whereby they are able to exercise their freedom using reason, knowledge and conscience. The liberal arrangement inevitably comes to be thought of as better and as possessing teleological significance. The ideas of freedom and social development are linked. The former becomes the grounds for the latter to occur. This will be discussed in greater detail in the course of

the dissertation. In federal America, freedom was contextual. It was conceived within these five assumptions (1) the absoluteness of the individual; (2) the adequacy of reason to guide; (3) the simple historical possibility of a virtuous citizenry; (4) the compatibility of plurality and community and (5) the probability, if not inevitability of progress in a social climate of freedom.

My special usage of freedom interacts with the preceding meanings in the following manner. A consensus within mainstream Protestantism formed an optimistic attachment to modern freedom, both as a socio-political and human project. In their understanding of mission and in their theological ideas, this constituency became imbued with the modern liberal values that were regarded as intrinsic to and supportive of freedom. In its high water mark, these Protestants lost sight of the dialectical importance of the church vis-à-vis society and attempted to invest their religion in the future and success of modern society and its principles in a direct way. With few exceptions, they were uncritically supportive of the exercises of individual liberty in society. Furthermore, they revised their own understanding of authority to conform to the Enlightenment shift of reference, i.e., from one outside and above the individual to one intrinsic to the individual. In this latter theological endeavor (although never fully accomplished), a segment of mainstream Protestantism became perilously close to being consistently identified with the premises of modern society.

By the end of the eighteenth century, much of mainstream Protestantism began to embrace the challenge of disestablishment, which required Christianity to be placed on a voluntary basis where influence replaced coercion. It recognized that if it was to have a social public role in the new political order, it must embrace modern freedom. By the beginning of this century, it had fully developed the character of its new role. It attempted to mainstream its minimal religious-moral values into society on terms which modern society, organized around freedom, could accept. The material essence of this involved the transformation of its religious authority. Post-establishment Protestantism's new social relevance was born with their self-conscious realization that it was Protestantism's destiny to provide the inner religio-moral constitution of the modern project. Protestants embraced their new post of duty and attempted, and to a significant degree succeeded to thoroughly penetrate the culture of the Republic with their religio-moral values.[14] In the nineteenth century, Protestantism believed it was the necessary complement to republican government. Openly, Protestantism

paraded its embrace of liberal republican values and its own happy acceptance of its new voluntary associational character. Post-establishment Protestantism's new social relevance was born with its self-conscious realization of this axiom.

Most of mainstream Protestantism in the nineteenth century became deeply imbued with the democratic world view and its underlying Enlightenment premises. As will be discussed, this direction was the seed bed for an eventual reaction and polarization within Protestantism giving place to two sides. Both sides remained identified with America as a republic of freedom, but only the liberals continued to work out that identification on terms truly compatible with the underlying Enlightenment premises of modern freedom. It is for this reason, that my paradigmatic use of "freedom" to describe a particular pattern traceable from colonial times into this century is proleptic. That is to say, the expressions of "freedom" in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, contained the seeds but not the full fruit of the twentieth century phenomenon. Through the main part of the nineteenth century, the impulses of "fixity" and "freedom," though in logical tension, lived on together within mainstream Protestantism.

Fixity

The Random House dictionary defines "fixity" as the state or quality of being fixed, stable or permanent.[15] This definition expresses well one of the goals that some mainstream Protestants have had for society as it developed in North America. Their passion has been to formally connect liberal society [i.e., society organized around individual liberty and democratic freedom], to their idea of God, standards of Biblical morality and to the religious designation "Christian." Used in this way, fixity has three interrelated nuances. First, it denotes the attempt to connect or affix one entity to something else if necessary, using political leverage. Second, it denotes to what society is being connected. In this setting, that which is regarded as potentially unstable in itself [society organized around freedom], is being connected to something that is thought to be stable - God and moral absolutes. Third, fixity denotes what the above connection is intended to guarantee [i.e., society's socio-moral cohesion or "fixity"]. Fixity used in this third sense, is identical to Max Lerner's use of this very term when he summarizes Alexis de Tocqueville's ideas about the effect of shared religio-moral values on society.[16] Without the presence of these shared values,

Tocqueville argued that society splinters into idiosyncratic particles. It loses its "fixity" or social-moral coherence. "Despotism," Tocqueville writes, "may be able to do without faith, but freedom cannot... How could society escape destruction if when political ties are relaxed moral ties are not tightened?"[17] Commenting on this statement, Max Lerner writes, "Thus Tocqueville saw the role of religion as the cohesive stuff of a democratic society which has lost the old cement of authority and must find a new cement of some sort if it is not to dissolve into atomistic dust."[18] Segments of mainstream Protestantism have concurred with this view, with the added proviso that when necessary [i.e., when cultural moral consensus breaks down or is absent], political leverage must be employed to ensure that these values remain definitive and constitutive of society, even if it means circumscribing the liberties of individuals.[19] Fixity is not a return to Constantinianism or Erastianism. It is a modern phenomenon even in its New England Congregationalist origins but especially in its post-revolutionary post-establishment development. It is a modern phenomenon because it expresses a desire to connect a free society (or nascent free society) to something authoritative and extrinsic to humanity [i.e., the Bible, natural law or tradition] not by way of the old ecclesiastical-political union, but a new religio-political strategy. Its only break with modernity is that this fixity is referenced to a standard outside the self and the collective selves and that it requires some special political support.

Whereas "freedom" connects with the idea of developmental societal change, "fixity" connects with the idea that society can be so organized to resist corrosive effects of time and change. Fixity is in tension with change - that is, change involving socio-moral degradation or corruption, so called. As the term denotes, fixity suggests a more static view of society, one in which society can be spared the historical aging process.

"Fixity" also lends specificity to the charge of control, by showing what is being aimed at in Protestantism's engagement with its world - a more morally stable *modern* society. The close identification with society which underpins control, does not arise ex nihilo, but from the vacuum created by the dislocation of the establishment model. Religious "fixity" as such, nuances the substance of Protestantism's identification with modernity.

The preceding explications are intended to demonstrate that the terms "fixity"

and "freedom," rather than further abstracting the concepts at work in this study, aim to make them more concrete. "Freedom" supplies content to the charge that Protestantism became too closely identified with modernity. Furthermore, it shines light on Protestantism's motivation in moving in the direction of this substantive agreement - integration and complementarity within modern social project.

The Genesis of Fixity and Freedom

In coming to native America, Protestantism came to a perceived virgin wilderness world and a new world grew up around it; a world it sponsored, fostered, nurtured and guided. By historical accident and design, America's nativity was wrapped in Protestant swaddling clothes. From the very start, Protestantism extended itself so as to proffer its religion beyond ecclesial boundaries for societal needs and goals. It is in this religious-societal expression of American mainstream Protestantism that the roots of fixity and freedom are to be traced.

At the inception of the colonial period, the religion of mainstream Protestant bodies was enlisted to participate in society in two ways, especially by the Puritans, but not exclusively. On the one side, it was explicitly employed for the maintenance of social order. On the other side, it explicitly conceived its mission, in part, as one of building society toward a new ideal.[20] Before the national formation, for approximately 200 years, the impulse for these involvements achieved a relatively harmonious expression through Puritan Congregationalism, notwithstanding Anglican and other establishment efforts. As I will show in chapter one, the Puritans of New England set out to be new world artisans of the relationship of religion to society. They are paradigmatic for understanding America as a religio-social experiment.[21] Under their design, religion was employed for both the ordering and the building of society in a unique way, in part discontinuous with Europe. Puritan notions of the building of society were fueled by an element of authentic social idealism.[22]

During the period of America's national formation, a new set of socio political assumptions came into being. While these assumptions succeeded in ending the Congregational, Anglican and other establishment systems, they did not extinguish the original social impulses of Protestantism. When European Enlightenment ideas were imported to fuel a revolutionary movement and build the Republic, the ground work was laid to both intensify and transform the two historic social roles of religion.

Revolutionary liberty contained within it both the seeds for an eventual revenge of religio-moral fixity and the idealization of society reorganized on Enlightenment premises.

While the original New England Puritan social idealism was carried forward in an explicit ecclesial and theocentric framework, the Founding Fathers' social idealism was fundamentally cast in an anthropocentric secular framework. It called religion into a supportive relation to the greater national republican challenge. In time, Protestantism would progressively become enmeshed in this new world project mixing its own mission and values with that of the secular.

The Founding Fathers had laid the groundwork for the original impulses of "fixity" and "freedom" to come to maturity. Unwittingly in the nineteenth century, Protestantism commenced on a journey precisely toward this end.

The Development and Maturation of Fixity and Freedom

In the historical setting of this study, the phenomenon of Protestantism's identification with its world manifested in the patterns of fixity and freedom, can only be regarded as coming to maturity in the national period. Only with the emergence of the nation does society become an autonomous entity. In this period, roughly identified as the time between the Revolution and the Civil War, the relation of religion to society was reinvented. Society, organized as a republic, was just beginning to find its feet, emancipated from politically and ecclesiastical hegemonies. Because Protestantism, once itself in the position of social control, was still learning what it meant to be associational and voluntary, the problem of proper differentiation was never fully comprehended. Differentiation was precisely the challenge nineteenth century Protestantism was confronted with. Disestablishment had opened up new distinctions between society and church, and society organized as it was on idealist Enlightenment values was gaining autonomy. The propensity toward control on the one hand and the propensity of uncritical identity in a setting of socio-national idealism on the other, were endemic to the situation at that time.

But the challenge of achieving proper differentiation goes deeper than these factors. Protestantism during this period was going through substantive changes that were rendering it more vulnerable to becoming uncritically identified with republican values and social goals. In contrast to the Colonial period, dominated by Calvinistic

ideas that presented a world in which a dramatic intransigent cleavage existed between the righteous and the wicked, the nineteenth century shifted toward an Arminian world view. Arminianism was more optimistic about the ability of all human beings to change. The freedom to participate with God's saving and transforming grace and become an initiator of, and agent in, one's destiny, came to be emphasized. This new religious assessment infected Protestantism and spread through revivalism and evangelicalism, emphasizing a unique religious experience as the essence of religion. The result was that Protestantism was made more anthropocentric, individualistic and positivistic, which came to be seen as more "American."

While in the nineteenth century, the patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" persisted together within a broad Protestant coalition, in the twentieth century, because of the inherent contradiction in these two and changing socio-cultural developments, mainstream Protestantism became divided. As already argued, these two manifestations are liberalism in the early decades of the century and the fundamentalist driven Religious Right in the later decades of this century. Each of these display a mature manifestation of the historic propensity for Protestantism to become identified with the possibilities and problems of modernity.

On the one side, that of the fundamentalist Religious Right, Protestantism has been pulled into identification with cultural forces resisting change, calling for continuity of values, roles and morals. With a new social militancy, it put forth the claim that America was, and must continue to be, built on a Judeo-Christian foundation and that its individual and social liberties are posterior to this foundation. This response required Christianity to be reshaped into a heteronomous force, which appealed to transcendent moorings for social stasis and order against flux, change, anomie, radical pluralism and some expressions of individualism; a relation of religion to society that has precedent in colonial and antebellum America.

On the other side, earlier in this century, the impulse for Protestantism's participation in the vision of social human development grew to maturity and went to seed. Historians point to the period around 1930 through 1946 as the period in which the social optimism of both society and liberal Christianity peaked, sobered by the depression and two world wars. However, this impulse has lived on, because it is deeper than any set of historical reversals. I argue that mainstream Protestantism in

America will always be vulnerable to becoming aligned both missionally and theologically either in support of freedom, or in tension with freedom. In the former case, it is freedom's inherent promise for change and progress that has attracted Protestantism. In the latter case, it is freedom's risk of creating conditions which foster socio-moral relativism, individualism, anomie, radical pluralism (plurality at the roots - dividedness) change, flux and shift of status, power and wealth, that has tempted Protestantism to fixity.

The above situation may be summarized as follows: modern society, organized around individual liberty, in time provoked a cultural perception that society needed to be grounded on religio-moral absolutes that existed prior to liberty. In this view, human nature was regarded more pessimistically. This cultural perception however was not a consensus. It was preceded and countered by another more dominant cultural perception that viewed human nature more optimistically and regarded society, organized around freedom and individual liberty, as the necessary matrix for development. In this view, an absolute set of religio-moral norms existing in heteronomous relation to society was viewed as incompatible to full humanness and social progress. It has been the presence of these cultural tensions that has exerted a force or pull on Protestantism, drawing it into alignment with goals, agendas and ideals either in service of social fixity or in service of a society consistently organized around Enlightenment ideals of liberty and freedom (cf between fixity and freedom). In either direction, the distinct differentiated identity of Protestantism has been compromised.

The temptation for the church's involvement in either of these cultural polarities is in part due to the scandal of its difference. Explicit relevance to socio-cultural struggles offers the church a social place and vocation. After all, what social entity is able with more authority to address the moral boundaries of life or the sanctity and inviolability of the individual than religion - the church? This is what H. Richard Niebuhr recognized when he warned that social relevance alone would lead to saving the church's life at the expense of losing it.[23]

"Corrective" Responses to the Problem of Fixity and Freedom

At the twilight of the Constantinian era, Roger Williams (1603-1683) and the Baptists made an important claim, namely, that the co-extension of Christianity and

society accomplished through political power was harmful both for society and Christianity. For the most part, they did not envision two roles for religion, one ecclesial and spiritual, another social and heteronomous (i.e., fixity). Chapter five reviews this development, focusing on two points of particular interest: One, the basis that these "reformers" set out to effect and sustain what they regarded as a proper Christianity - world differentiation, and two, the consequences of their way of underpinning the church's differentiation; consequences which would only become apparent with the passing of time. It is in this discussion that the study implicitly begins to reveal (A) that Christianity's proper differentiation with the world in any given time and setting is not a simple historical possibility and (B) careful attention is required regarding how differentiation is informed.

At the mid-point of the twentieth century (at a time when modernity had come to full maturity), Neo-Evangelicalism emerged from fundamentalism in tension with liberalism. Between what it deemed as the problematic separatism from the world (characteristic of fundamentalism) and assimilation into modernity's values (characteristic of liberalism), neo-Evangelicalism auspiciously set out to quarry a new (or "renewed") place for American Christianity. With an eye on how Neo-Evangelicalism sought to sustain this position, chapter six reviews this development. Here, again, the key issue is how differentiation is sustained and the consequences involved.

Beyond Fixity and Freedom

Sociological, Theological, Ethical, Historical and Biblical Resources

In Chapter Seven, the dissertation turns from the historical setting of a particular phenomenon, to a theoretical discussion about the deeper issue that underlies the presence of this phenomenon. The kind of relationship that Christianity sustains to the modern world is the key problem. Using select sociological, theological, ethical, historical and biblical resources, this chapter attempts to demonstrate that the special challenge with which the church is confronted, is to discover the basis for, and importance of, formulating a differentiated relation to its particular world.

Three of these select resources are Bowen theory, Karl Barth's dialectical construction of the gospel (in addition to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's "ethical" reflections

which were indebted to his seminal work) and the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. Murray Bowen, the father of Bowen Systems Theory or "Bowen Theory" observed that the behavior of parties within a social system, often did not display integrity to who these parties were in themselves (i.e., the motives values and identity that were germane to themselves), but corresponded to the expectations and tensions that were present within the social field or zone they were in. Broadly speaking, the challenge he saw that existed in all social relations was healthy differentiation. Differentiation is contrasted by two opposite social movements, one away from the other body or bodies (i.e, separatism or dualism) the other toward the other body, eliminating difference through uncritical identification (i.e., submersion of identity) or control (i.e, external alignment).

Furthermore, he observed that submersion of identity displayed itself in subtle forms, most often in the shape of complementarity. Complementarity describes that phenomenon in which the "weaker" party or social body finds a role for itself that is deemed to be explicitly relevant to the perceived outstanding needs of the greater body or order.

The challenge that Bowen clearly perceived was that of relating to a particular social system, one shared without sacrificing integrity to one's self. Differentiation was a statement about the particular character of a body's relationship. It defined a particular way of relating, not the absence of engagement.

Barth called into question nineteenth century European cultural Christianity. In the setting in which his work emerged, the church's religion had become problematically entangled with the emerging values of the Enlightenment. Barth's theological implement explicitly crafted to pry these two apart was evangelical. Ultimately, Barth exploited Reformation Evangelicalism, placing the weight on the covenantal character of the gospel transposed into a doctrine of Revelation, thereby creating a dialectic which called the church to the radical difference between God/Kingdom of God and the world. As will be demonstrated, Barth's theology laid the foundation for an "ecclesial" versus a cultural-religious formulation of Christianity. Between Protestantism's tendency toward absolutism on the right and relativism on the left (both of which served to "prove" Christianity's relevance to modern society as both a socially conservative and socially liberal force), Barth pointed to an evangelical formulation of Christianity that referred the world to the

God who had come near in Jesus Christ as Judge, Lord and Saviour. The simple abstraction of Biblical and Christian truth made serviceable to social needs and goals was foreclosed by evangelical truth which changed both the *"ordo salutis"* and the idea of truth itself.

The stretch marks of the church's emancipation from the parochialism of its place within Jewish sectarianism to one of Gentile catholicity are to be found throughout the New Testament, but perhaps nowhere more than in Paul's' letter to the Galatians. In this letter, he theologically legitimized this transition by rewriting the prevailing ecclesiology to conform to the advent of the messianic period. In order to accomplish this, Paul exploited the Apostolic gospel, radicalizing the Evangelical universal nature of its faith, effectively thrusting the church into a new openness to its world. In essence, what Paul did was to change the character of the boundary which had guaranteed the cleavage between the ecclesia and the world. The old boundary, which rested on taboo backed by the authority of Torah, created a dramatic cleavage, if not a church-world dualism. The new boundary relied on transcendent and spiritual categories, which are antithetical to a thorough-going church-world cleavage. The ecclesiology that emerges in Galatians supports a differentiation from, but not a dualistic posture towards, the world. For this reason, it is of interest to the problem under study in this dissertation.

Armed with the constructive insights drawn from Chapter Seven, the conclusion re-approaches the historical situation that the dissertation has framed. Here, the goal is a modest one. Only critical questions are raised, albeit questions hopefully guided by the benefit of insights derived from a theoretical and historical grasp of the complexity of the problem.

Provisos Pertinent to the Development of the Thesis

The dissertation is concerned with a general or perennial problem examined within a specific historical setting. The general or "universal" character of the problem might be succinctly described as the propensity of American Protestantism to become uncritically identified with it's world. Clarifying this is important to emphasize for two reasons.

First, because it is only well into the body of the study that "fixity and freedom" appear to be what the dissertation assumes they are from the beginning,

namely expressions of Protestantism's problematic and uncritical identification and involvement with its world. The strength of the claim is not first established and then historically disclosed. I first recognized these patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" for what they were by theological study and then turned to the historical factors and roots of these patterns and began to study them by tracing them in their nascent stage. Throughout chapters 1-6, there is a search for connections. However this is especially true of the early chapters which bring forward information that only much later is considered to be pertinent. As such, the method of developing the thesis is less linear and more discursive.

Second, the preceding proviso is important because it suggests why the indictment against mainstream Protestantism made in this study is not simply transferable to other socio-political settings that may outwardly appear to present a parallel. The history and thought peculiar to the birth, development and political organization of the United States mark the boundaries and context inside of which the charge of "fixity" and "freedom" are legitimate and recognizable as such, but outside of which they are something else and need not bear that identity.

The analysis of the problem of Protestantism's perennial propensity to become uncritically identified and involved with America, both pessimistically (fixity) and optimistically (freedom), is twofold. First, the study aims to be generally attentive to what is occurring historically *in the world*, which would predispose Protestantism towards these involvements. Second, it aims to be more specifically attentive to what is occurring religiously and theologically *within Protestantism* which contributes to the problem.

As I have indicated earlier in this Introduction, "fixity" and "freedom" are conceptually laden terms to describe two directions which grew out of a common problem described as Protestantism's close identification with the development of modern America. As such, they refer back to a common problem and for this reason the patterns of fixity and freedom often overlap. They remain useful, however, in nuancing two directions which grow out of Protestantism's historic attachment to America.

A further word is necessary regarding the decision to introduce the term differentiation to define the problem of Protestantism's uncritical identification with its world. From one perspective, it may be argued that weak "differentiation"

describes one half of a deeper problem integral to this study - that of relevance. The issue of relevance is addressed in the conclusion. The thesis, as it has been shaped, is *apparently* blind to the question of relevance until the end. It is there that the question of how the church is able to sustain its relevance while escaping the perennial problem of falling into uncritical identity and alignment with the world, is addressed.

The reason for this "blindness" is due to the way relevance is understood in this thesis. If differentiation is properly formed, relevance will be automatically achieved. The body of this study (Part I) is fundamentally critical because it is formulated on the premise that properly discerning and confronting the problem of uncritical identification is the foundation for recovering true relevance. Descriptively speaking, the important factor in "relevance" is the *presence* to a given body (individually or corporately) of another body that maintains its differentiation. Thereby, two alternative destinies are resisted, that of becoming uncritically fused with another body [either in a "strong" position of control or a "weak" position of uncritical identification], and that of becoming insular - separatistic, so as to abridge contact and involvement.

In an effort to overcome dualism, the church may attempt to be relevant. But relevance itself must not be merely determined by engagement with the world but a timely engagement sourced from its (the church's) grounds of differentiation. In the final analysis, it is not a question of the church's relevance to the world, but relating the world and its way to something more final and determinative. In this manner, relevance does not weaken ecclesia and ecclesia does not become insular and dualistic.[24]

The term "mainstream Protestantism" is used at various junctures in this study. Chapter Three shows in what sense this organizing description is valid. Clearly, sectarianism persisted after disestablishment but not to the exclusion of a new Protestant fraternity that emerged from two primary forces. First, there was the impact of the Great Awakenings, especially the second Great Awakening. Under the influence of the revivals, Protestants began to relativize the importance of doctrinal differences and focus on the experiential and practical facets of Christianity. Second, disestablishment and republican government created a new social "emergency" in the minds of many Protestants. Rather than accept the privatization of the church [i.e., the relegation of the church from a public role to a private status alongside other sects and

religious groups] they discovered their religious unity and sought a new way to impact the course of society.

Elwyn Smith, in an article entitled "The Voluntary Establishment of Religion," writes "...Insofar as the general term Protestant has acquired historical meaning in the United States, it refers to religious groups that learned the lessons of consensus and collaboration from Lyman Beecher."[25]

William McLoughlin makes a similar observation. "Evangelical religion, despite its increasing fragmentation into denominations during the nineteenth century, prided itself on its denominational fraternalism. Which is another way of saying that after 1800, America ceased to have any systematic theology or creedalism which could be defined as orthodoxy in any denomination. Lyman Beecher's famous statement of 'The faith once delivered to the saints' (1832) may be taken as the essence of the Evangelical creed so far as it had one: belief in the 'great Christian fundamentals' of the miraculous birth, death and resurrection of Jesus to save men from damnation was the only essential element in Evangelical theology."[26]
"Christianity and particularly Protestantism in America," claims H. Richard Niebuhr "must be understood as a movement rather than as an institution or series of institutions."[27]

Endnotes

1. See Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air, The Experience of Modernity*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1982, 1988), pp. 9, 10.

See Zygmunt Bauman, *Post Modern Ethics* (UK: Oxford, 1994), p.2.

2. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches,* Vol. II, trans. Olive Wyon (London : George Allen & Unwin; New York: McMillan), p. 1012.

3. Ibid, p. 1011.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid, 1011, 1012.

6. Ibid.

7. *The Kingdom of God in America* (Chicago & New York: Willett Clark & Company, 1937), p. 181.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid, p. 197.

10. Ibid. p. 195.

11. This will be discussed in Chapter Three. One should consult the basic bibliographic resources cited in this Chapter for evidence of the claim made here. A collection of essays that points this out is *The Religion of the Republic.*

12. *Democracy in America*, Introduction by Max Lerner, p. LXXIV (check page and reference).

13. Kant's motto of Enlightenment: Sapere-aude! Have courage to use your own reason! That is the motto of enlightenment." Immanuel Kant, *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* 1784.

14. "The Protestant alliance... with its formidable array of proselytizing and reforming enterprises, posed as 'the great conservative principle of the community.'" Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, *A Nation So Conceived* (New York: Charles Scribners and Sons, 1963), p. 26. [The last quote within this quote, Heimert and Niebuhr took from the Editor's Introduction of *America: A Sketch of its Political, Social and Religious Character*, by Philip Schaff.]

15. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd Edition, Unabridged*, ed. Stuart Berg Flexner and Lenore Cravy Hauck (New York, 1987), p. 1624.

16. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Mayer and Max Lerner, trans. George Lawrence (Harper & Row: New York, 1966), pp. LXXIII, LXXII

17. Ibid, p. LXXIII.

18. Ibid.

19. My use of the term "fixity" is one which refers to an attempt to keep society anchored to given (absolute) moral antecedents for society's sake and its inherent need for these. This attempt is one of relying on "evangelical" non-coercive cultural means to achieve social fixity. The use of the term fixity in this theses begins with this definition, but adds to it the further dimension that in this explicit complementary position, there is already the seeds of control. By virtue of the role into which nineteenth century Protestantism had entered, it was vulnerable to taking on too much responsibility for society. Because of the place that it chose to fill, it was a short step to be drawn beyond its happy embrace of republican liberty and ecclesial voluntarism to a posture of control (that is, if society were to stray too far from *their* religio-moral principles [which, after all, were considered to be fixed by their very nature]).

20. This distinction is not contrived. It is historically verifiable. New England Puritanism commenced its social experiment on the distinction of "two societies". One was viewed pessimistically, and necessitated control. The other optimistically and included political, economic and ecclesiastical rights or freedom under the rubric of altruistic social vision. In time this formal division was removed but the two impulses persisted as distinctions.

21. This claim that the Puritans are paradigmatic for understanding America as a religio-social experiment is considered in chapter one and is more fully discussed there. "The Puritan view was more clearly articulated and effectively implemented in this country than those of other groups." George C. Bedell, Leo Sandon, Jr., and Charles T. Wellborn, *Religion*

in America, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1975), 20. By virtue of their seminal beginning, clarity and "success" of their beginning, they impressed on the American consciousness a religio-social vision for the country.

22. This point is also developed in chapter one. Bedell, Sandon & Wellborn in Religion in America state the traditional view when they say," ...the Puritans were sure in their own minds that they represented God's Chosen, carving out a new and revolutionary kind of society in a world opened up to them by divine providence, just as Canaan had once been opened up to Israel." (p. 19) This view is not wrong, but it is inadequate as it stands. See chapter two notes (in this thesis) on Zakai's study.

23. H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Church Against the World," in *Theology in America, the Major Protestant Voices From Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy*, ed. Sydney E. Ahlstrom (New York: Bobbs and Merril Co., 1967) 596.

24. Theologians have addressed the inherent problem created by the attempt of the church to "be relevant" to the world, "cooperate with the secular world's goals and projects" or "be present" to the world. See for instance Jurgen Moltmann *Theology Today*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1988) . Commensurate with the employment of the church in this way there exists a corresponding risk to the discrete integrity of the church. Identity, stasis, cohesion are placed in some jeopardy. This has not framed this problem as such and addressed it directly. Tangentially and indirectly the thesis, developed around differentiation intersects this problem, bringing to it a distinctive resolution.

25. *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn A. Smith, "The Voluntary Establishment of Religion" by Elwyn A. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 178.

26. *The Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology"* ed. and intro. William G. McLoughlin (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 5, 6.

27. *The Kingdom of God in America*, pp. xi, xii.

THE SOURCES OF FIXITY AND FREEDOM: EARLY AMERICA

CHAPTER ONE

Religious Sources: The Puritan Fathers

The contemporary patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" discussed in the coming Chapters have their historical roots in ideas and policies which took shape in both the colonial and revolutionary period in American history. Mainstream Protestants, especially Puritan Congregationalist divines and the Founding Fathers, each had a vision for a new kind of society and a new relationship which religion was to sustain to society. Each shared concerns about the maintenance of order and cultural cohesion and each had aspirations to build society toward a new ideal. But the similarity between the Puritans and the Founding Fathers ends there.

The Founding Fathers, discussed in the next chapter, started with a political need to construct the society of a new nation, and recognized in religion an important aid to their social project. Their task and vision was the implementation of a new socio-political experiment, one in which religion was given a new role. The Puritan Fathers saw in religion a creative social potential, largely untried. Even so, the Puritan beginning did not wholly break with the traditional ordering and civilizing role of religion so rudimental to the European assumptions in existence at that time. The Puritans moved from the religious to a secular frontier seeking to reform and transform the latter out of the vision inherent in the former. The Founding Fathers began with a new social and human vision and sought to ally religion to it and, if need be, submitting religion to radical revision.

This chapter focuses on the early New England Puritans, not because they are wholly unique among most of the other English colonies in North America, but because of the degree to which they recognized that America represented the potential for the beginning of a new relation of religion to society. Nine or ten of the original thirteen colonies had some form of religious establishment; Puritans most fully entered into the challenge and opportunity that America offered for a new equation of these two.

America was thus born as a religious - social experiment. The Puritans, mostly Congregationalists, exerted a potent influence over New England for 200 years, shaping with other colonial establishments America's self understanding in the formative stages of its settlement by Europeans.[1]. It is for this reason that I begin by reviewing the sources of the Puritans work and thought. While events would in time

displace the Puritan system, the new relationships between religion, society and church they invented, and the theological formulation on which they drew to underwrite these relationships have had ongoing significance. *It is in those relationships that the beginnings of "fixity" and "freedom" are to be traced.*

The chapter is organized as an inquiry into the Puritan church-society-religion arrangement. This is followed by a conclusion which demonstrates how this arrangement and the ideas behind it contributed to the formation of the patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" within mainstream Protestantism.

The body of the chapter looks at this church-society-religion arrangement from three points of view. First, it is discussed from the standpoint of the historical exigencies from which it arose and in contrast to existing and earlier models. Second, there is a discussion of the central theological ideas that informed this arrangement. Here again, contrast is employed to achieve insight. Finally, the actual praxis of the Puritan Congregational model is reviewed. The insights gained from this discussion, provide the basis to disclose the logical connection between the modern patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" and the historical ideas and precedents that were formed in North America by the Puritans.

The Historical-Ecclesiastical Matrix of the Puritan's New Religion-Society Relationship

While Calvinism provided the basic building blocks for New England Puritanism, the Puritans cast their Calvinism in a distinct vision of themselves within the sequence of historical events and their view of the judgments and providence of God. The picture of the New England Puritans coming to America with a bold religious zeal on an errand to attempt a realization in history of utopic religio-social ideals, is a distortion.[2] More recently, studies have shown that the vision behind their 'errand' was shaped by the defeat and rejection of Puritanism in its endeavor to reform the church of England.

Their passion, as Avihu Zakai's study has demonstrated, was that of a pure church. They understood themselves in the setting of the drama found in the apocalypse of Revelation 12, where the woman flees into the wilderness. The Puritans were the woman, the true church, who was persecuted by the corrupt church-state alliance (the "whore" cf. Revelation 18). Leaving a hostile and corrupt

situation, ripe for impending judgment, they were first seeking sanctuary. This then is the ideological setting of their 'errand'. The wilderness, a necessary place of sanctuary, was simultaneously a gift of separateness. Separation provided the context for the true church to emerge and achieve its distinct integrity. Purity and wilderness were mutually supportive of each other.[3] New England Puritans embraced the wilderness for what they understood it to be: the unique opportunity, time and place for the church to realize the integrity it was refused in England.[4] The importance of this event in the stream of time was that it assumed special historical significance. Not unlike other settings in which Calvinism flourished, the Puritans infused both America and the timing of their beginning with unique Christian significance in the flow of salvation history. Their America would become a beacon of true religion, fulfilling the destiny inherent within Protestantism but not yet realized.[5] Simon Schama has shown that around the same time, Calvinistic Hollanders came to understand themselves in light of Israel's calling. Like Israel, they recognized in their history the special providence of God, deliverance from bondage and a calling to be in a special covenant with God. Were they to stray like Israel of old, they could expect to be humbled by their God. In fact, Schama insists that "to a great extent this scriptural exhortation was a *common idiom of all Calvinist and Puritan cultures of the early seventeenth century.* Abrahams, Isaacs and Jacobs could be found in Rouen, Dundee, Norwich and Basel as well as Leiden and Zierikzee."[6]

In discussing the Puritan and later republican roots of the United States' conviction of its providential calling, Reinhold Niebuhr has essentially brought out the same point, namely that many, if not all, modern nations have in their histories a conviction of special election.[7] New England Puritanism's sense of special calling must be understood as one expression of this larger phenomenon; a phenomenon that may be endemic to the make up of Calvinism and the formation of republican governments. Calvinism and Old Testament narrative provided the imagery and ideology necessary for them to interpret and impart purpose to their experience. The extremity of their experience may be in proportion to the importance they came to view their history.

North American Puritanism's ideas of election, however, have one distinct feature, bound up with the argument with Bishop Laud and the Church of England. As Sidney Mead point out,

> "The emergence of the nations corresponds in time with the Reformation, so that concurrent with the fragmentation of the Empire into nations came the fragmentation of the universal visible church into many particular churches. And in those areas where reformation churches were established (Scotland, England, Geneva, Holland, the principalities of North Germany, and Scandinavia), the nation assumed its own form of Christianity and established 'a national form of religious organization' fusing 'the spiritual tradition of the new and secular nation... with the spiritual tradition of the old and Christian society....' Thus the essentially spiritual society of the nation was, in effect, Christianized by partially digesting into its spiritual core a particularized version of Christianity. For its people the nation became also their church, and the church became also their nation – church and nation being merely different perspectives on the one society to which they belonged. Such at least, says Ernest Barker, was the vision of Hooker and Laud in England where the identification was most complete, although never absolute.... This view was being challenged in England by nonconformists with a different view of the nature of a church and, consequently, of its relation to civil authority. It was the nonconformist view, adapted to the American environment, that was to triumph and be incarnated in.... the United States.[8]

New England Puritanism's historical narrative placed a new distinction between church and state by adding a new "player" in the Christianity - nation equation: religion. The result of this, as will be argued at several junctures in the following chapters, is that Christianity is the loser and nation [in this instance autonomous nation minus established church], eventually swallowed up and absorbed the idea of providential election.

In order to fully appreciate New England Puritanism's passion and 'strategy' for separateness and their appropriations of the Old Testament idioms of calling and election, it is necessary to review the presuppositions of the Anglican religion-society relationship from which the Puritans' point of departure took its distinctive turn.

It is the formal linkage of church and society in the Erastian model that is the significant characteristic in seventeenth century Anglicanism which highlights Puritanism's new direction. The actual location of power which supported this connection, whether over the church, under or alongside (all positions tried in the history of Constantinianism) is less important in this discussion. The assumption, which went back to antiquity, that the religion of Christianity was to be co-extensive with society, meant that society was to be "religionized" and that religion would be "socialized." Christianity in this form became an extension of public civil life.

This assumption may be traced to the fourth century CE at the beginning of the Constantinian era. At this time, the mass of society was given a public Christian identity, culturally guaranteed by a regional policy of infant baptism and socially guaranteed by political authority and power. The Church's dependence on political power was reflected in its hierarchical, institutional, authoritarian and pedagogical character which created a laity characterized by confession, conformity, dependence, passivity and receptivity. Society as such would be 'religionized' but not spiritually transformed. In this form, the rites that once marked one's introduction into a separate messianic fellowship and the shared communion of that fellowship - baptism and the Lord's Supper - were transmuted and extended so as to ritualize the common passages of life. Birth, adolescence, marriage, death, burial, were sacralized as were days and events of public import.[9] For the church, this meant that Christian life was an extension of civil existence. Constantinianism replaced the primitive cohesion of the messianic community; faith, hope, and love gave way to an external adhesive unity.

Constantinianism had rehabilitated the state.[10] Primitive Christianity's antagonism toward the state, reflected in apocalyptic thinking, was replaced. The state was viewed along side the church as an instrument of justice and order whose legitimation ultimately could be grounded in creation and natural law. Church and state cooperated with each other and upheld each other as institutions serving common ends.[11] For the church this cooperation meant it would be enmeshed in a source of power that had often been raised against it.

The involvement of the church with civil power, whether in the classic Constantinian arrangement or later Erastian arrangement had been a source of conflict since at least the fourth century. In the seventeenth century this criticism was taken up with renewed vigour.[12]

The practical significance of the church's involvement with political power for the state was that it was given access to another source of power and authority to assist it in its vocation of keeping the peace, maintaining order and ensuring public morality. This meant that the church's religious power would be looked to by the state as a "conservative principle" inevitably enabling it to resist revolution, anarchy and reform.[13]

For the church, the practical significance of having access to civil power was that it could coerce universal conformity to its beliefs and practices resist internal

dissent and calls for reform. In the larger picture, access to political power was a key factor, if not the key factor, which enabled the church to create a Christian civilization, thereby greatly diminishing, if not eliminating, the tension between the church and the world.

From the standpoint of the more radical Puritans, the problem with the Church of England was not merely content, but its basic form. Unable to reform the Anglo-Erastian system, Puritan efforts in America commenced with a determination to reconstruct the church-society relation and provide a witness to England of their better way. Armed with both Calvin's ecclesiology and their own experience, they called into question the foundation of the Erastian system as an unholy fusion of church and world. Formally tying church and state, they argued, had caused the integrity and potency of the gospel to be seriously compromised because it had failed to create a distinct regenerate community of believers, and as such denied society the soteriological benefits of true religion. Both the church and society, they argued, had suffered corruption under the Erastian system.[14]

It was the Erastian form of religion that the early Anglicans attempted to transplant to America. Society in this model was held together by vertical and horizontal authority. Vertically, society was correlated upward through priest, bishop, archbishop to the Crown; horizontally, from priest to bishop back through time to the Apostles each connected in time to the previous generation. This kind of authority provided the foundation of society, at once fixed, stable and cohesive, commensurate with the medieval epistemology and cosmology. The Puritans' goal was to introduce new distinctions between the ecclesia and society while keeping society correlated to religion by relying less on force and more on reason and persuasion.

The Anglican model did not succeed in America, if for no other reason than that America functioned as a glass, magnifying both pluralism and individualism. The stress of these two forces in the climate of changing attitudes about the nature of authority, exacerbated by the colonial perception of the abuse of authority, would further spell the demise of this model.[15] Equally important is the fact that the system was often corrupted in America, so much so, that many in society rejected it for its moral failure, concluding that its moral laxity was a consequence of the religious system itself. Even so, the correlation between social order and religion (the Christian Protestant religion) remained etched in the American consciousness.

The Theological Sources of the Puritan Religion-Society Relationship

In coming to America, the Puritans were on "a grand errand," as they put it, "to propagate in this wilderness the blessed Reformed Protestant religion in the purity of its order and worship."[16]

"Their vision can be summarized as the Calvinistic idea of a society ordered in worship and in all realms of life by a single religious understanding. This was a hope which emerged out of the English scene but became effective only in America."[17]

Landing on the north eastern shores of North America in the second and third decades of the seventeenth century, the Puritans organized society to ensure that it would be under the influence of their religion, mediated through two parallel institutions: the church, and the civil magistrate (with its councils). The unique form that eventually dominated New England and lasted for two hundred years was made from source materials they brought with them, primarily Calvin's revision of the Constantinian view of the church's relation to society.

Calvinism provided the basis for the persistence of Constantinian goals within a revised Protestant framework. As Ernst Troeltsch points out, it is John Calvin who makes the Protestant legacy serviceable for nation building.[18]

Calvin's revision of the Constantinian form and mission of the church is best understood in light of his continuity and discontinuity from Luther to whom his original theological debt was directly owed. Neither Luther nor Calvin fully recovered the Evangelical vocation of the church or its form as a community of believers. Luther did, however, lay the foundation for both of these. He conceived the church as subservient to the word of the gospel. Where the word of God was declared, he insisted, the church came into existence as a community of faith. It was an act of creation by the word ("the word of faith which we preach"[19]).[20] By making justification by faith the foundation of the church, Luther had recovered in principle the basis of the primitive congregation. Formally or contextually this was compromised by the fact that he relied upon political power to establish the Reformation in the territory in which it was to gain dominance. This meant that the Reformation spread in Europe in part from the "top down," not "bottom up" (that is to say, through evangelism and conversion). To a significant degree, conformity preceded, and therefore compromised, Luther's freedom of faith with its concomitant

priesthood of believers.[21] This alliance with the ruling magistrate, ensured that the form of Christianity would continue to be that of a societal religion, thereby effectively eliminating the church - world differentiation, along with the tension that it created.

That Luther's congregation remained locked into a greater social stasis is also reflected in his view of the Christian life, which in dignifying every vocation, however lowly, reinforced the feudal world view.[22] At the deepest level of theological critique, it may be said that Luther recovered and exploited the extrinsic moorings of faith [i.e., the historical objective work of Christ *for* the believer versus, for instance, the work of the spirit *in* the believer], and polemicized a sacerdotal and authoritarian church. He thereby recovered and exploited the personal significance of faith, reclaiming the importance of the individual.[23] But he failed to fully recapture the eschatological thrust of faith which would have reasserted the tension between church and world, and rupture the Constantinian synthesis.

While Luther moderated Constantinianism by making religion a study in faith, and church a study in preaching and hearing the word of the gospel, Calvin both revised and intensified it. He did this by reinventing the church's mission along lines both parallel to medieval Constantinianism and at the same time, dramatically different. The medieval Constantinian church formed a sacerdotal relation to the world uniting the world to itself in sacral dependence and thus creating a dramatic cleavage between lay and clerical.

Calvin, on the other hand, was concerned with the spiritual integrity of the congregation as an agent of truth and righteousness in a society composed of the wicked and the elect. In this, he built on Luther's recovery of the church as the congregation/priesthood of believers. But unlike Luther, he emphasized that the church was called into a particular relation to society. Society was intended to incarnationalize the fruits of true religion in every sphere, including education and government.[24] Calvin did not return to the Catholic-stoic use of natural law which allowed the medieval church to recognize the state as an institution grounded in the natural law.[25] Rather, beginning from his theological presuppositions, he conceived both state and church over society as agents of God. The validity of the institutions were derived from the idea of the sovereignty of God and the depravity of humanity. The two institutions were parallel but different in power and function.[26]

Most importantly, he shifted the basis of the congregation slightly but definitively away from the Lutheran emphasis on faith (which focused on the righteousness of God), to a faith which found its ultimate reference point in the sovereign will of God.[27] This changed the self-understanding of the church to that of the elect.

This identity shift had several consequences. It intensified the distinction between the elect (the church) and the wicked in society. It placed on the church the necessity to demonstrate its qualitative difference (i.e. its election) so that a greater portion of the weight was moved from the faith - justification equation of Luther to that of sanctification. However, it is important to stress that this sanctification is not primarily focused on the self's experience of God.[28] Rather, it had a robust extrinsic concrete focus. Life was to be devotional (i.e., the turning away from self and living to the glory of God) and ethical (i.e., serving others and society).

Ethically, the elect were caught up in the larger vision of a teleological calling.[29] Over against the wicked, they were the agents through whom society and its institutions were to be established on the principles of true religion. This new agentary role of the church was due to Calvinism's "development" of the Reformation idea of calling. Luther's idea, as already noted, interpreted call in such a way as to dignify a believer's mundane vocation and overcome a secular-sacred dualism. All mundane tasks were given a new identity - "calling" understood as service to God. This view however, did not give to the church and its members a new vision or sense of its mission regarding society. Rather, it served to baptize the existing socio-economic order of society in a way not dissimilar to the medieval sacerdotal system. The medieval system did not require the transformation of the secular realm, only that it be mediatorally connected via the mystical power of the church to the sacred. Essentially in the medieval view, the church was an instrument of fusion between heaven and earth. Neither the Lutheran view or the medieval view yielded a distinct and separate, i.e., "true church" or a missionized society, only a societal religion or religionized society.

Through identifying the church as the elect, Calvin did not fully disconnect society from the church. But what he did do is introduce into this equation new distinctions which allowed for the integration of a 'true church' (through the intensification of identity - i.e. the elect over against the wicked) and the idea of

secular calling restoring the place of mission. In this, society was not left bereft of religion, and the church was given spiritual integrity as a discrete entity.[30]

In Calvin's thought, "calling" was devotional and ethical. To meet the need to inform these, Calvin asked from the Bible more than that of a witness to the redemptive significance of Christ. He and the Puritans who studied him, turned to the Bible to provide the details of Christian living.[31]

The Puritan Church-Society Arrangement and How it Functioned

Beginning with Calvin's teleological emphasis of the church as that of calling, and his view of the state as not over the church (in Erastian form) but alongside it, also a servant to God's purposes, the Puritans proceeded to build a society. Their model commenced on the principle of distinction. There would be no fusion between church and state. In no sense were the Puritans going to perpetuate what they viewed was the mistake of incorporating all subjects into the church as its standing membership.[32] In the beginning, they emphasized that only individuals who were authentic Christians, having been regenerated by the spirit to faith and piety, and who espoused their Reformed confession, were to constitute the church.[33] Their first concern was that this church would itself embody the fruits of its separateness in its life, its doctrine, its worship, and in its influence over society. While they did not question the premise that society should not be independent from the church, they were also sure that the greater mass of society was not part of the church.

The fact that church was to sustain a societal calling, i.e. the building of a superior kind of society, was due in part to their debt to Calvin's revision of Constantinianism. Calvin was able to effect this theological revision by beginning his theology from the universal unconditional significance of the sovereignty of God and his will expressed in part in the two tables of the commandments. Within this setting, he posited the predicament of humanity as that of both accountability toward, and resistance to, that sovereignty. This tension was expressed as, on the one hand, a state of sinfulness before God and, on the other, as a state of chaos and disorder within human society.

The church and state were two institutions that found their legitimation within this greater paradigm of God's universal sovereignty and will which framed all men and women. The greater mass of society (those outside the inner elite's society,

composed of church members/citizens) were not to be left to anarchic elements arising out of humanity's condition.[34] This the state was to ensure.[35] The will of God was the foundation of human law. There was no place in Calvin's logic for a bifurcation of that will, that is, between the first and second tables of the ten commandments. The role of the state was external. Its task was to confront human beings with their accountability to God and his law and 'begin' the process of ordering society (using coercion if necessary). The church, on the other hand, provided the setting for this will to be formed inwardly through voluntary obedience, faith, worship, and profession of the truth (its power being persuasive in character). It was for this reason that the rights and freedoms of society were correlated with church membership. The social realm was not allowed to be independent from this foundation.[36]

The church had the following characteristics in relation to the extended society. First, it was set apart from the mass of society as a discrete congregation of members. Membership was predicated on a genuine Christian experience, with due emphasis on the inward and outward evidences of election. Along with this, membership was also formed through paedobaptism of members' children. Membership brought with it societal privilege. For instance, only members were qualified for civil offices. Full rights and privileges of Citizenship within the commonwealth were bound to membership. The members, through their elected ministers, submitted to the General Court the moral and doctrinal laws that they believed should be part of the civil code. When schools were set up, the membership (clergy) controlled the selection of teachers and ensured appropriate religious instruction.

The General Court guaranteed outward obedience to civil laws, which were both religious and social in character, through recourse to coercive measures consisting of fines, imprisonment, public shaming, whipping, banishment, and hanging. For instance, through its power the General Court suppressed dissent (if persuasion failed), punished all infractions of these religious and social laws, levied a tax for the support of the church on all residents, and compelled church attendance by all.

The system, as William McLoughlin points out, relied on "coordinate" powers which functioned autonomously but cooperatively.[37] The autonomy, of course, was

relative. While no ministers were qualified to serve on the General Court, only godly men, members of the church, could serve. And while this court had the final say on the interpretation of its laws and judgments it handed down, the church submitted the laws. The commonwealth was explicitly designed to be a Christian theocracy, which simply meant that the laws by which society was governed were conceived of as the law and will of God and administered by Godly men who were in covenant with God.[38]

Obedience had two reference points. First was the sovereign will of God. Disobedience of civil laws was understood in the framework of an offense against the God with whom they were in covenant, and upon whom their prosperity and blessing depended. Second, obedience to the law ensured the coherence and formal unity of the extended society with the church. As such, the foundation of society was religious. The possibility that the world which would grow around them (as it rapidly did in New England during the seventeenth and eighteenth century) would not be firmly anchored to religious fixtures that were understood as the basis of all order was never entertained.

Furthermore, the integrity of this Christian commonwealth required uniformity. No alien world or competing religious teaching which would divide the people was allowed. The commonwealth and the church were to co-exist in formal unity. At issue in this configuration, were assumptions about the theocratic basis of the extended society.[39] Society did not properly hold together by itself, but was a byproduct of a greater order.[40] Neither was religion viewed simply as an expedient for society's ends. Rather, God was the invisible ground of society, so that its visible order was a byproduct of the ordering of the individual in obedience to this God and his will.

The correlation between pure religion and the integrity of society in this system was indirect but substantial. The Puritans, following Calvin, sought to succeed where Erastianism had failed. Their plan was, accordingly, threefold: one, the promotion of the spiritual integrity of the congregation and its religion; two, the building of society, its structures and citizenry out of the congregation and the logic of the true religion embodied in the congregation; three, the formal organization of all inhabitants in the area around this select, godly society, the church/commonwealth. Their logic, or 'theologic,' was that the church's mission to society most properly

consisted of pure religion. They were single minded in their persuasion that pure religion bore good fruit. Their task was to provide and build a commonwealth on those religious foundations, organizing the greater mass of society around this center.

Over against a "corrupt" church and a disintegrating "Christian"" civilization (an inevitable judgment in light of the failure of their reform vis-à-vis England) they sought a pure church and a transformed society. Partly due to their ideas of covenant and blessing (and partly due to Calvin's ethical focus, which worked to ensure all spheres of life would reflect glory to God) building a society to the glory of God was their project.

The New England Puritan system lasted for two hundred years, finally being completely dismantled in 1833. Its corrosion was both internal and external. From the outside it suffered from dissenters, such as the Quakers (four of whom were hung in the seventeenth century), Baptists, and so called "Antinomians," such as Anne Hutchinson, and others. The growing pluralism in America forced Congregationalism both to greater heights in its exposition of the Reformed faith and, ironically, to further reliance on the coercive power of the state to achieve conformity. From within, it suffered from its policy of paedobaptism, which, as McLoughlin points out, undermined the integrity of their plan by progressively leading to a generational elite. This elite perpetuated itself from one generation to the next through the half way plan that shaped New England Puritanism into a social religious hegemony.[41]

Within a few generations, the membership lacked the original passion of faith and piety, and increasingly became synonymous with moral rectitude and orthodoxy (the social privilege of the righteous). In time, Congregationalism was forced to face the full challenge of democratic and evangelical movements which contained dissimilar social and religious principles. What persisted, as if indelibly etched on America at its birth, was a sense of its special calling as a model Christian people among the peoples of Europe, and a correlation between society's governance and the religious values and beliefs of Christianity.

Summary

The Significance of the New England Puritan Experiment for Understanding the Roots of Fixity and Freedom

"Freedom"

The problem of "freedom" has been defined as Protestantism's close identity with modern America, an identity which progressively led them to attempt to integrate their religious values and beliefs directly and consistently into a new liberal social order. This problem has its roots in the following:

(1) It grew out of the Puritan's history of defeat and retreat regarding the Church of England. This history gave birth to a new mission. Puritans came to America with a passion to prove something about the relationship of Christianity and society. Because constructing a better social order was one of their primary objectives, there was a risk that this goal would take on a life of its own and that Protestant religion would be placed in service to this goal. The fact that building a better society was an explicit plan rather than an accidental by-product of other goals, contained within it the seeds of an eventual problem. In time it was inevitable that Protestantism would conceive of its social obligation in terms of providing religio-moral resources for the public order, thereby fulfilling a simple direct and complementary relation to its world.

"The migration that Winthrop eventually led to New England," Cremin writes, "went considerably beyond and, in its very nature, represented yet another transformation in the theory of colonization. Like the Pilgrims, the Puritans who settled Massachusetts came as a community, knit together by ties of family, friendship, and common loyalty. Like the Pilgrims, too, they were attempting to preserve their religious and cultural integrity. But in addition, and more important perhaps, they were seeking to demonstrate to the world at large the nature and practicability of a divinely ordered Christian commonwealth. 'We must consider,' Winthrop wrote in the oft-quoted peroration 'A Modell of Christian Charity' (1630), 'that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.'[42]

Equipped with "better" ecclesial and theological ideas, Puritans came to America with socio-political designs. This is the ground floor of the close identity that

formed between Protestantism and the development of America. Equally as important is the nature of their design. As pointed out, the distinctions they insisted upon eventually eroded . In other words, their interest in keeping the church separate from society at large, while insisting that the greater social mass and commonwealth project remain connected to the religio-moral consonants of Protestant Christianity, eventually bore fruit in the "religionization" of the republic or, to use Mead's phrase, "a nation with the soul of a church."[43] The church lost much of its own distinct vision to the socio-political realm which it sponsored. The connection between religion and society they pioneered, took root and grew while their vision of a separate ecclesial body as the "soul" of Christianity and the dialectical source of society's spiritual-moral health diminished.

It is important, however, to remember that the creative vision that the Puritans had for society, while idealistic in the teleological sense of Calvin's vision of the church's calling, was not utopic. The Puritan design for the future was over against a church - state relation considered "corrupt," and in a climate of burgeoning rights, organized around mercantilism and the decline of feudalism. True piety, fostered through membership in a regenerate community, and nascent republican freedom were the primary building blocks of their New World society in that beginning.

(2) It grew out of the juxtaposition of religion and nascent republican freedom.

Of central importance in understanding this is the context of the Puritans' social designs, namely, that they possessed the freedom to construct societies according to their own will. While not exempt from British rule, the New England colonies began as mercantile interests of jointly chartered trading companies and were not under the direct supervision and design of the king. The explicit, economic purpose, combined with the religious goals and leadership of Puritan divines (mostly Cambridge graduates), set the original stage for social experiment. Two original motivations were the sources of this beginning; to build wealth and to rebuild society around a purified church, possessing true piety.[44] As is well known, these two motivations would interpenetrate each other.[45]

On May 18, 1631, the church of the Massachusetts Bay colony concurred that "no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this body politic, but such as are members of some of the churches within... the same."[46] This freedom was the freedom to vote, hold office, own property and generally participate in the political

ordering of society. This linkage of freedom and piety must be understood in light of the way Puritans had come to understand the English situation. Their perception was that society was breaking down and that the corruption and decay that characterized England was a consequence of the corruption of English religion and its resistance to reform.[47]

As such, the idea of church was reconceived in America as one involving a social mission in a context of increasing individual and economic freedom. As the soul was to the body, so reformed religion was to society. "New England," Edward Johnson, an early American Puritan wrote, "is the place where the Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth, new churches and a new commonwealth."[48] The point here is that New England Puritanism commenced on one primary assumption. The creation of a new prosperous and nascent modern commonwealth was dependent on the existence of true piety nurtured and protected by a discrete church membership consisting of true believers. Their socio-political goals and the ecclesiastical goals were explicit and interdependent. And it is not fair to say that the latter merely served the interest of the former. They viewed all of life from a theocentric perspective. That membership in the body politic (civil freedom) and membership in the church were connected and ensured the former would develop as planned.

In time however, the link between church, piety and freedom deteriorated. Concern for piety was reduced to a concern for morality and the democracy of the believers gave way to a more inclusive model of democracy. What would be etched in the minds of Americans is the importance of morality to freedom and Protestantism's role in sponsoring both morality and freedom. Mead explains "... this church-state [system which the Puritans created] was a democracy of the Saints. Obviously the whole structure rested upon the assumption that, within the judgement of charity, they could distinguish the Saints from the unregenerate with sufficient accuracy to guarantee the perpetuation of the rule of the Saints. And when confidence in that assumption was undermined, as it soon was when morality became indistinguishable from piety, the democracy of the Saints flowed out to embrace the whole community, to include all the people."[49] Historically, what Protestantism was bequeathed from this history was a conviction that its role was to supply moral resources to liberal society.

The matter goes deeper than this. H.R. Niebuhr, Andrew McLoughlin and de Tocqueville all argue that the seminal principle behind modern republican freedom

originated with Protestantism and not first with the Enlightenment. Protestantism had within it a principle which could be critically applied, not only to the medieval church, but to all pretensions of authority. Increased human freedom was the inevitable consequence of the application of the Protestant principle. New England Puritanism's political construction reflects the Protestant tendency to relativize political and ecclesiastical authorities within the proviso that people be related directly to the transcendent God and His will. They were pioneers [following Calvin] in reconstructing ecclesial and political power in a way that increased individual and democratic freedom while ensuring that the new freedom remained integrated to a responsible existence under God and toward each other. They had no provision for absolute freedom. Absolute freedom, they were sure, would end in chaos. In time however, the new freedom would come to function in a less theocentric and ecclesial framework and a more democratic and anthropological framework with Protestantism providing a moral and religious supplement.

(3) "Freedom" grew out of Calvin's view of calling.

Intrinsic to this creative impulse for a new society was their understanding of election and calling. The elect, over against the wicked, provided the basis for distinction between themselves and the greater mass of society. What ensured that this distinction did not become a thoroughgoing social and/or geographical separatism, was their sense of calling. Calling brought them back to the secular tasks. As such, calling tended to strengthen the identity between the church and public life and institutions of society. Human life in all its spheres was to be reordered to the glory of God. Economics, law, politics and education were all spheres which were reordered to that end. The weakness in this concept was that while this reordering of society was a creative force to build structural institutions that influenced all, the commonwealth proper belonged to the Puritans.

Inherent to their social creation was community. The Puritans understood society as a covenantal arrangement. Properly speaking, "society" extended no further than the closed community, although the institutions of this society including the church building, and the public meeting hall, served and affected all persons in the district. Covenant explicitly tied all those within it together for the purposes of mutual care and critique around common values, beliefs and goals.

But the covenant was not universal. One by one, individuals entered this

covenant community under God. Living in this arrangement required a commitment to an ethic of social involvement, embracing the needs and cares of others as well as allowing one's life to be bounded by community standards. Human life in particular and the church as a whole were given a teleological orientation, which directed their collective talents and resources toward building a society for the glory of God. Within this context, freedom and wealth were not viewed as ends in themselves.[50] Society itself was a project with purpose.

Beyond mere calling in fidelity to the Calvinist theological understanding of church, the Puritans gave additional specificity to the idea of their calling. Rejected in England, they would replace England's opportunity and calling with America. America was infused with eschatological significance--a place where Protestantism would at last achieve its destiny. Society itself was the "proof of the pudding." True Protestant religion was finally to be set free to demonstrate its power.

(4) "Freedom" grew out of the Puritans' rationalization of piety.

The idea of calling is the source of the Puritans' impulse to "rationalize" piety. The Puritans employed Calvin's revision of the Reformation's transformation of medieval dualistic asceticism. The spirituality that required a select few of the church to depart from the world and serve God was countered by a new spirituality (no less austere) which required all members of the church to return a new self to the world to reshape and mold it to the glory of God. This is the "desacralization of the world" which Weber noted about Puritanism.[51] It involved the rationalization of piety, "Within... [New England Puritan] society, education would assume utmost importance, not merely as an instrument for systematically transmitting an intellectual heritage, but as an agency for deliberately pursuing a cultural ideal. Family, church, school, university, the community itself - all would be dedicated to the task of molding men."[52] In time, this impulse to institutionalize piety became less connected to the church, and more a national cultural phenomenon which Christianity sponsored.[53]

However, in the period under discussion, this transformation and re-employment of asceticism was not channeled into the world in a general open way. In other words, the church attempted to transform the mundane only within a limited sphere over which it enjoyed direct influence and control. The greater mass of society was then organized around this "transformation," bereft of independent and political

power which if possessed and misused would compromise this transformation. In this way, the world was made stable and improved. As such, the church's social vision possessed an idealism, that is "ideal", within the limitations of living this side of the parousia. Later, it will be demonstrated how the scope of this transformation became more general - not linked to a formal ecclesially defined and dominated social space. The entire socio-cultural and national sphere became the circumference and goal of this "transformation." The interesting feature about Puritanism is that while the Puritans were not naive about the prospect of overcoming the falleness of the human condition, they believed in the power of true religion to build a better society even though this required a limited use of coercion and a degree of social disparity. Properly understood, within Puritanism there existed the wisdom to live in the tension between a world denying pessimism and a naive optimism while attempting to maintain the spiritual integrity of the church.

In time, Protestantism came to embrace the world directly and was penetrated by Enlightenment idealistic premises. The point at hand is simply to note that there existed a vision and plan for a "free" better society which arose out of the possibilities inherent in the transformation and re-employment of ascetic spirituality and Calvin's ecclesiology and that this plan contained within the seeds of "fixity" and "freedom."

(5) "Freedom" grew out of the Puritans' view of reason.

Puritanism came to flower in America at the same time that rationalism and empiricism were gaining credibility. While the beliefs of the Puritans in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century were derived from scripture and evangelical (i.e., Reformation) teaching, they became increasingly confident that their positions could be verified by empirical and rational methods. From this point it was a short step to a view of rationality and empiricism which had their final source of appeal in human reason and experience alone.[54] But the matter goes deeper than this. Sontag and Roth point out that the Puritans "were humanists and believers in classical education. They believed in the immutable essences of Plato and in man's conformity to them. Rationality is implicit in man and inherent in the order of the universe. Puritanism was Renaissance humanism embodied in a system of Christian belief."[55]

This view of rationality is evident in John Wise's *Vindication of the Government of the New England Churches 1717*. Mead observes that, "While Wise used all the traditional arguments from scripture and the practice of the primitive

church" his arguments are renown for his *"Demonstration II, From the Light of Nature."* "Here Wise insists that governments are derived from 'man's reason, of human and rational combinations, and not from any direct orders of infinite wisdom.'"[56] The Puritans' ideas of rationality were very close to those that were emerging from Enlightenment sources which the Founding Fathers would appropriate. Thus, Puritan Protestantism contained within it ideas about the reliability of reason, which would lead into close identification and sympathy with the coming social order and project.

"Fixity"

The roots of fixity, understood as Protestantism's willingness to employ its religio-moral values to regulate society's boundaries, are found in the following overlapping factors: (1) Calvin's theocentric revision of Lutheranism in light of his view of human nature; (2) Puritanism's historical experience with Bishop Laud and King Charles I; (3) Puritanism's rationalism.

(1) The reputation of the internal unity, order and coherence of Puritan societies is proverbial. The sovereignty of God is the central idea behind these characteristics. It is the source of the Puritan logic for the binding elements they insisted on for their societies. The sovereignty of the one God was the basis of a Calvinist Puritan universalism. All humans, without exception, were under this one God. Even though some were irredeemably wicked, they were no less accountable.[57] All persons were to be correlated to this one center. It was this center that provided society its cohesion and unity.

Society did not hold together well or properly on its own; society's unity was not vested in itself. The Puritans' ecclesial and civil passion was directed toward facilitating this human-God connection.[58] From the ecclesial side, they were determined to avoid all cant, ritual, rhetorical intonation, relying on clear exposition of scripture, urging its authority to facilitate this bond. In practice, they were reluctant to use power to secure agreement to their religious and moral positions. Reason and argument were the implements of choice. Their commitment to persuasion and logic, over against recourse to reliance on institutional fiat and power, is often overlooked. They wanted their unity and cohesiveness to have internal integrity, going to great lengths to expound truth no less to the "wicked" who were required to attend church.

However, lacking a satisfactory response, they resorted to coercive measures to enforce biblical morals and doctrines. The Puritans had followed Calvin who, as H.R. Niebuhr writes, "... did not regard restraint as a positive step toward the attainment of good; it was rather a device for keeping the individual and society from rushing to destruction..."[59]

Fundamentally the Puritans had no depth of confidence for the "unifying force of Aristotelian 'habituation' or socialization".[60] If a person within the greater mass of society was not to be a threat to social harmony, that person must be made to recognize the fear and authority of God. Civil powers existed to ensure that all in the greater mass of society would respect this will in word and act. Like the clergy, the civil magistrates were ministers of God, mediating the authority of God expressed in the laws of society . Through them, individuals were continually brought back to accountability, to the awesome sovereignty and severity of the one God. Without this heteronomous "ministry", society would unravel (since human nature and human society were not stable in themselves, being in inward tension with the law of God). Furthermore, allowance for the multiplicity of opinions and the laxity of morals would jeopardize their experiment and undermine their original charge against England.

Even more grave was the fear of forfeiting God's blessing. To allow their society to be infected with ways not according to the will of God would be to breach their side of their covenant with God and forfeit his blessing, a blessing that was measured by their physical and material health and prosperity.

(2) The Puritans boldly sought to reclaim the church from the world. This was their prophetic courage as they saw it, to emancipate the ecclesia from its captivity to society-at-large and political power. But they were not simultaneously willing to allow society emancipation from the religion of the church. They wanted to have "their cake and eat it too"; they wanted Christian civilization, a Constantinian "accomplishment" and at the same time, a discrete Christian society, the yet unfulfilled promise of the Reformation. In order to achieve the latter, the basis of the former necessarily required altering.

The church, while insisting on being differentiated from the wider lot of society for the sake of purity, was not willing to allow society to be differentiated from the church's religious beliefs and values. As such, the Calvinistic - Puritan revision of Erastianism required the creation of a new entity -- 'public religion'.

Religion was required to be "universal" via political leverage while church membership was parochial. By not permitting the world to become different from them, morally and religiously, while at the same time insisting on their own qualitative spiritual difference, they created a righteous elite, a historic "moral minority."

The fact that they wanted to manage the religio-moral caliber of the greater mass of society from a distance, set in action two precedents which make up the character of fixity to the present time – the bifurcation of Christianity into public religion and private church. This split requires that the church (or churches) invent a means whereby it can ensure that Christian religio-moral tenets become normative for society at large. In the colonial setting, this power was formally coordinated with the church. In the post-colonial period, access to this power has been more difficult and its pursuit has legitimately incurred hostile reactions.

(3) It is important to recognize that from the start, seventeenth century Puritanism was moving toward a rationalism that would bear fruit in time in Unitarianism and deistic type sympathies. Its bias toward rationality must be understood in light of two historical factors. The first is its original struggle with the church of England. English Puritanism had emerged claiming the high ground of truth and suffering the weight of the heavy hand of religio-political authority. The irony is that it is in part this confidence in the "hard" rationality of its truth that underwrites its recourse to coercion to ensure moral - social order. This confidence in the rationality of their truth, universal and demonstrative to all, sets up their ultimate willingness to revisit coercive power to force unity. Insubordination against reasonable argument merited the use of force.

The roots of fixity are to be found in these three factors which were theological, historical and rational in origin. As shown, the roots of "freedom," understood in this dissertation as Protestantism's idealistic involvement in liberal values and project, are also to be found in this beginning. Both by making the building of society its explicit mission and by bringing to that task its "new" (not utopic) approach, the groundwork was laid for Protestantism to become too closely identified with the creative project of building a "new," "better" and "free" world. Society was their "foster child." [61]

Endnotes

1."The Puritan view was more clearly articulated and effectively implemented in this country than those of other groups." George C. Bedell, Leo Sandon, Jr., and Charles T. Wellborn, *Religion in America*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1975), 20. By virtue of their seminal beginning, clarity and "success" of their beginning, they stamped on American consciousness a religio-social vision for the country.

"We are wrong if we consider our origins as uniquely Puritan, and yet Puritan thought, by virtue of its hold on New England, perhaps did have a more disproportionate influence on us." p. 37. "But Puritanism was at first the most conspicuous, the most sustained, and the most fecund influence in early American national history." p. 37. Frederick Sontag and John K. Roth, *The American Religious Experience, The Roots Trends and Future of American Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

2. "The Puritans and Pilgrims came to create a pure church, conduct a holy experiment in a wilderness where none would interfere, none would oppose or even distract. They were not hypocrites who came to America for freedom of religion, then would allow a similar freedom to no one else. That was never the plan, never the errand. They came to prove that one could form a society so faithful, a church so cleansed, that even old England itself would be transformed by witnessing what determined believers had managed to achieve many thousands of miles away." Edwin Scott Gaustad, *A Religious History of America*, new revised ed., (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1990), 56.

3. "One of the colonial governors said in 1692, 'God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grain over into the wilderness.'" Quoted in Daniel L. Dreisbach, ed., *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic: Jasper Adams and the Church-State Debate*, (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 52.

4. "Who knows but that God hath provided this place to be a refuge for many whom he means to save out of the general calamity, and seeing the church hath no place left to flee into but the wilderness." John Winthrop, *General Observations for the Plantation of New England*, quoted in Virgil A. Kraft, *The Freedom Story*, (Tujunga, California.: Parthenon, 1977), 88. (Baptist Joint Committee Archive, BR516.K6.)

5. See Avihu Zakai's study, *Exile and Kingdom*, in which he focuses on the significance of wilderness for understanding the nature of Puritanism's "errand." "In the historiography of American Puritanism, Perry Miller's essay inaugurated a lively and fruitful debate over the ideology of the settlement of New England. However, in focusing on the nature and meaning of the Puritan "Errand into the Wilderness," the most important concept appears to have been neglected; namely the very concept of wilderness." Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) , 121. "Separation from--and not identification with--England, constituted then, the very theme of the Puritan migration to America... For according to the Puritans, only alienation from sinful England could bring them to a true reformation, and hence to reconciliation with God. Therefore, 'God gave liberty' to his saints 'to escape with their lives' from the Dragon's rage in England and led them to a place of 'liberty.'" (122) "An ultimate dimension of the redemptive flight of the church of the Wilderness was, indeed, the urgency of separating from an established corrupted religion, and the necessity of fleeing to the wilderness wherein lay the only hope of living according to God's word and ordinances. This was, of course, exactly what Puritans felt in 1629 about England,

'where every place mourneth for want of justice, where the cryenge synnes goe unponished, or

unreproved, crueltye and bloode is in our streetes, the lande abowndeth with murthers, slawghters Incestes Adulteryes, whoredome dronkennes, oppression and pride where well doinge is not maytayned, or the godly cherished, but Idollatrye popery and what so ever is evyll is cowntenanced, even the least of these, is enowghe, and enowghe to make haste owte of Babylon, and to seeke to dye rather in the wylderness then styll to dwell in Sodome Mescheck and in the tentes of Keder.'

Thus, out of the fear of God's impending judgment, the saints' exodus from England became an essential dimension of the Puritan Errand into the Wilderness sanctuary of New England.

"Yet apart from the vision of the wilderness as a shelter and a hiding place, and particularly following Brightman's exegesis, Puritans of the 'Observations' were fully aware of the redemptive significance of the wilderness that God would redeem his chosen ones from sin and corruption of Egypt, as in past times the Lord 'carried the Isralites into the Wildernesse and made them forgette the fleshpotts of Egipt.'" (164).

See also George H. Williams, *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought: The Biblical Experience of the Desert in the History of Christianity* (New York, 1962); Peter N. Carroll, Puritanism and the Wilderness: *The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier*, 1629-1700 (New York, 1969); and Alan Heimert, "Puritanism, the Wilderness, and the Frontier, *"New England Quarterly* 26 (1953), 361-82.

See Estep, *Revolution Within the Revolution*, 74.

6. Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 94.

7. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Scribners, 1952), p.72.

8. Sidney E. Mead, "The Nation with the Soul of a Church," *American Civil Religion,* ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp.48-49.

9. For a synopsis of this transition, see Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 318-320.

10. "According to ancient social doctrine, the highest task of society is to show the gods of the polis the necessary reverence, since the country's welfare and peace is dependent on their favour. If the Christian church becomes the religious institution of the whole of society, it takes over this function, becoming the *cultus publicus* and the guardian of society's public rites." Ibid., 318. "The motives of Constantine and his successors were realistically political. Although nominal Christians, they retained the title *pontifex maximus* and used the new religion as a means of unifying their complex and disintegrating empire. They sought to impose on civilization one rule, one culture, and one religion." James E. Wood, Jr., E. Bruce Thompson, and Robert T. Miller, *Church and State in Scripture History and Constitutional Law*, (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press), 60. "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false and by the magistrate as equally useful." Edward Gibbons, *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (1776), 1:22.

11. The first volume of Ernst Troeltsch's *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* provides a classic study on how the Church came to a positive view of political power, appropriating the stoic view of natural law. "For our subject in particular the first and most important point is only the assimilation of Stoicism into Christian thought--the acceptance of the 'Stoic Natural Law, or the Divine Law, or the Law of Nature'. For this acceptance of Stoicism was not merely the means of fixing and defining the ethical conceptions in general within Christianity, but it was also the means of placing the world, that is, the State, the law, and the system of social functions, in the right relation to the existence of the Church and the community of the redeemed." Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian*

Churches, Vol. I, trans. Olive Wyon (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan), 144.

12. Robert Bellah insists that " Constantinianism and Christendom died in 1648 at the peace of Westphalia". Robert Bellah, "How to Understand the Church in an Individualistic Society", in *Christianity and Civil Society*, The Boston Theological Institute Series, vol. 4, ed., Rodney L. Peterson (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, Boston Theological Institute, 1995), 9.

13. The following statement, written by Jurgen Moltmann, in reference to 19th century Europe, captures the problem under discussion here; the consequences of the church's alliance with the state: "On the other side we find the authoritarian principle 'God, king and fatherland.' This is the expression of conservative reaction. It interpreted the phenomena of the modern world which I have just mentioned in contrary fashion as signs of a crisis in social order and the apocalyptic downfall of the world. The major European churches and their theologians consistently chose this conservative option in the nineteenth century. The Catholic philosophers De Maistre, Bonald and Donoso Cortes developed the state philosophy of counter-revolution, and later Rome also spoke in these terms. The German Lutheran theologians Julius Friedrich Stahl and August Vilmar described religion and church as the deliverance of the nations from the 'sickness of revolution'. The Calvinist theologian and Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Abraham Kuyper, commended 'reformation against revolution;: all revolutions are directed against God. Democracy, the sovereignty of the people, liberalism and secularization are the diabolical names of the 'beast from the abyss' and signs of the outreach of chaos. Revolution against the ruling powers is rebellion against God, as is shown by the revolutionary cry 'Ni Dieu ni maitre'. Therefore revolution leads to atheism and atheism to anarchy. Only religion can rescue the authority of the state. Only the authority of the state can keep the life of society in order. Only the churches can cure the peoples of the disease of revolution. Christian theism was presented as a religion supportive of the state, in that it provides transcendental legitimation for the unity and the hierarchical ordering of society." Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology Today*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1988), 4-5.

"Religion can become the chief source of a state's greatness if it is rationally used..." Religion is good "only if it produces good order." Niccolo Machiavelli quoted in Carlye Manny, "Levels of Power," (Baptist Joint Committee Religious Liberty Conference, 1958; Baptist Joint Committee Archives).

14. There were varying degrees of separatism in the early New England Puritan settlements. The Plymouth and Salem plantations were strict separatists in relation to the Church of England. The Massachusetts Bay Colony did not wholly damn or view themselves as fully separated from the mother church. This "middle walking," as Roger Miller named it, did not moderate their own special identity and calling with regard to laying the foundation for a new relation between religion and society. See William R. Estep, *Revolution within the Revolution: The First Amendment in Historical Context*, 1612-1789, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 72-73. See also Edwin S. Gaustad, *Liberty of Conscience: Roger Williams in America*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 25, 41-42.

15. America set the stage for the emergence of a new Anglicanism or Episcopalianism. From the beginning, the Church of England in America was made to function with less ecclesiastical authority. Lacking the presence of a Bishop and a scarcity of trained clergy, necessity required the vestry to assume more prominence. By the time of the Revolution, Enlightenment ideas permeated the church, further tempering the historical authoritarian configuration of Anglicanism.

16. Edwin S. Gaustad, *Religious History of America*, (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1966 repr. 1990), 63.

17.John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity: Interpreted Through its Development*, (New York: Scribner, 1954), 116.

18. Ernst Troeltsch, in *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, points out that, in contradistinction to Lutheranism, Calvinism "penetrate[ed] the political and economic movements of Western nations..." (2:577) "After a period of initial success Lutheranism ceased to advance. This must be attributed, in the main, to its stress on personal piety, its acceptance of the existing situation, its acquiescence in the objectivity of the means of grace, as well as to its lack of capacity for ecclesiastical organization, and its non-political outlook. It was the destiny of Calvinism to extend the Reformation of the church throughout Western Europe, and thence out into the New World, and, actually, Calvinism is the chief force in the Protestant world to-day." Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, vol. 2, trans. Olive Wyon (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), 576.

19. Romans 10:8.

20. "This doctrine [justification by faith] is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the Church of God." *What Luther Says*, comp. Edwald M. Plass, 2:702. Luther also said: "Where the word is, there is faith; and where faith is there is the true church." Quoted in P.D.L. Avis, "'The True Church' in Reformation Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30, no. 4 (1977): 323. "The Church," the Augsburg Confession (1530) declared, "is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments are rightly administered." *Augsburg Confession, Article VII: Of the Church, "Concordia" or Book of Concord: The Symbols of the Ev. Lutheran Church*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 13. "If the Reformation has done nothing else, it has clarified what is perhaps the most important theological question in this or any other age. Do we find the truth by submitting to the Church, or do we find the Church by submitting to the truth?" Edward J. Carnell, *The Case for Biblical Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1969), 26.

21. Moltmann argues that the Reformation did not complete one of its promises, namely, the restoration of the congregation to its true form as the priesthood of the believers. It compromised this by the persistence of ecclesiastical authoritarianism, clericalism, and patterns reinforcing lay dependency. The mature congregation remains the "open future of the Reformation." M. Douglas Meeks, introduction to *The Open Church: Invitation to a Messianic Lifestyle*, Jurgen Moltmann (London: SCM Press, 1978), 15.

22. Essentially, Luther's distinctions between society at large organized under the magistrate and the Christian congregation interpenetrated each other. One effect of this is that it neutralized the distinctive, radical character of the congregation as a discrete social entity, which embodied values at variance with the existing world it shared. Luther broke with the Thomistic unitary connection between a theologized stoic natural law (which justifies and informs the state) and the heteronomy of the church as the vice regent of all natural and revealed truth. He therefore made room for the emancipation of the secular, but not on idealistic premises. The autonomy of secular feudalistic institutions, political, economic and domestic (patriarchy), was justified by and necessitated by the present evil age. These institutions, which were given their own legitimation (although shown to be necessary by the theological facts of the gospel), became, of course, socially formative and determinative, so that the church's only social function was to moderate them by its ethic and

piety, and call for a Christian understanding of obedience to them. For a detailed discussion of this, see Troeltsch's *Social Teaching*, 2:540-560.

23. For a more thorough discussion regarding the forensic character of Luther's thought, see chapter four, section A, "Evangelical Revision."

24. "In Calvinism this idea of the *Corpus Christianum* is regarded as the union of the Government which discerns its duties--both from the point of view of Christian and of Natural Law--in reason and in the Bible, and the active independent Church, which administers its own law of Divine justice for the Christianizing of Society, and also works with the State in the spirit of a common obedience to the Word of God. It is a uniform system of life and of Society as a whole, inspired by one common ideal in things secular and sacred, which therefore possesses a comprehensive sociological fundamental theory." Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 2:617.

25. It is important however to recognize that "in contrast to Stoic and humanist conceptions, Calvin subordinates natural law to the sovereignty of God. There is no law above or outside God: 'God is above the order of nature.' That is to say that the command of God directs the obedience of man to something 'higher' than itself, namely, to the 'free will' of God as the source of order. Therefore, God is only obeyed by man's *voluntary* response, a response in which man's free will 'mirrors' the freedom of God. Short of such obedience, the natural-moral law can simply compel and convict, but it provides no basis for genuine or complete coherence in itself." David Little, *Religion, Order, and Law*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 40-41.

26. The state "is first and foremost a theological entity, and it falls squarely under the aegis of Calvin's 'passion for order'. It is ordained and established by God for the maintenance, at all costs, of his providential design... The rulers are the servants of God, charged with creating and maintaining order on behalf of God. They are to perform their duty in the knowledge that all power stems ultimately from God, and were he to withdraw his hand, no order could exist." David Little, *Religion, Order, and Law*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984 reprint New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 42-43. "Neither Church nor State had for Calvin, in his initial experiment with a Christian society, the self-sufficient independence with they had in other systems. Both were instruments and agents of a theocracy. Since Calvin's overruling and determining idea was the sovereignty of god, all other ideas, together with the institutions which incarnated them were made subservient to it." Willard L. Sperry, *Religion in America.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), 146.

27. Troeltsch rightly concludes, "it is the inscrutable will of God that is the basis of the world and the cause of its whole course." Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 2:582.

28. The Calvinist-Puritan idea of sanctification is in contrast with what Harold Bloom and others have argued is the essence of American religion, namely "a personal experience." William James, Bloom suggests, offers the definitive description of American religion. "Religion... shall mean for us [Americans] the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine." Harold Bloom, *The American Religion* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p. 25.

29. As is well known, "calling" went through a transformation during and following the Reformation. Luther began this change by dignifying secular vocation so that it was put on par if not above the ascetic-monastic pursuits. This emancipated and dignified labor. While

Luther would proceed no further with this idea, Calvin would build on it. For Luther, giving divine sanction to one's particular labor/vocation functioned to reinforce a providentially stratified world where each was allotted his/her divinely appointed and fixed place. Calvin built a bridge for calling into a new era. "Calling" as Anthony Giddens states, summarizing Max Weber, became "more vigorously developed in the Puritan sects." Anthony Giddens, introduction to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* by Max Weber, trans. Talcott Parsons, (New York: Scribner's, 1958), 4.

30. For a fuller discussion of this, see Wilhelm Niesel, "chapter fifteen: Secular Government 1. The Divine Institution of the State," in *Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight, (Great Britain: Lutterworth, 1956; Philadelphia: Westminster Press). See also Troeltsch, "The Holy Community," in *Social Teaching*, 2:590.

31. See Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 2:585, 586.

32. "One of the proudest claims of the New England Puritans was that their system retained its uniformity and its stability, simultaneously maintaining a strict division between the things that are God's and those that are Caesar's. Not only did they have no bishops or ecclesiastical courts, but no creeds, no rituals, no liturgies, no disciplines, no book of common prayer imposed upon their autonomous churches by the state. One of their claims to being a more purified Christian Commonwealth lay in their careful attempt to maintain a rigid line between the rights of the churches and the duties of the magistrates. Though they were accused of establishing a theocracy, they called their establishment a 'coordinate' system, and they laid down careful regulations to keep the ministers and the magistrates within their respective spheres. These two spheres, said John Cotton, were not to be confused 'either by giving Civil Power to church officers, who are called to attend to Spiritual Matters and the things of God.' [...] The Puritans had had sufficient experience with ecclesiastical interence in religious affairs in England to make every effort to avoid this in New England. 'It is not so long since our own Necks bled under an intolerable yoke of Imposition on conscience as that we should forget what it is to be so dealt with,' said Increase Mather. 'God's institutions (such as government of church and commonwealth be),' John Cotton concluded, 'may be close and compact, and coordinate to one another yet not be confounded.'

"But if the Puritans have received too little credit for the step they took toward separating church and state in their opposition to Erastianism..." William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 12-13.

"The Puritans who came to Massachusetts Bay in 1628 brought with them the principles of theocratic church-state relationships which Calvin had put into effect in Geneva. Their expressed purpose in coming to New England was to establish a Bible commonwealth, a community 'under a due form of government both civil and ecclesiastical.' They were not long in establishing their own church-state, which differed from the English church-state they had fled from primarily in that it soon became Congregational rather than Anglican and was basically theocratic rather than Erastian." Leo Pfeffer, *Church State and Freedom*, Rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 74.

33. As history proceeded to demonstrate, this ideal of purity, in so far as it was attached to a regenerate church membership, soon underwent revision. William G. McLoughlin summarizes the New England Puritan shift on this ideal as follows: "What drove the Baptists, as Nuttall points out, was that fulsome, heart-warming, soul-shaking experience of conversion by the Holy Spirit which lay at the base of the whole Puritan movement. This acute personal experience produced an unquenchable yearning to communicate that experience to others, to relate with others who shared it, to participate actively, with other

soul brethren, in worshiping the Christ who had transformed them. To the spirit-filled pietist the minister was merely the first among equals. The founders of New England had felt this power of the Spirit and had thrived on it in England. The power of the Holy Spirit--the sense of total personal commitment and the yearning for self-expression which the Holy Spirit engendered had sustained their own anticlericalism, antiprelaticism, and antisacerdotaism against bishops and kings for two generations. But they had also seen its dangers, and now that they were more wary than ever of zealots. Fearing lest their Bible Commonwealth founder upon the rocks of enthusiasm and separatism, the Massachusetts leaders were rapidly transforming their sectarian zeal into churchly order ... [T]he halfway covenant [i.e. the allowance of the infant Baptism of members' children and grandchildren]... was an essential ingredient in the replenishment and the continuity of the Puritan churches--an element in the transition of the Bible Commonwealth from a pietistic to a formalistic system--or, in [Perry] Miller's nice phrase, from 'a reformation to an administration.'" McLoughlin, New England Dissent, 1630-1833, 31, 32.

34. Little, *Religion, Order, and Law*, 42-43.

35. For Calvin, the magistrate was god for God to the people. He was a mediatorial-representative figure. See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Repr. 1975), Book IV, Chap. 20, Section 2.

36. As already noted, Calvin organized all of humanity under the sovereign will of God and proceeded to identify the proscriptive contents of that will with religio-moral particulars in scripture. In the New England Puritan setting, the unity of this will, administered through the church and magistrate, was called into question by early Baptists and Roger Williams, in particular. They argued the magistrate was not to have any jurisdiction in the strictly religious realm of this will, namely those precepts marked out by the first table of the Ten Commandments. New England Puritans resisted this break with Calvin. Obviously the two views had far-reaching social consequences. See chapter five.

37. McLoughlin called the Puritan system a "coordinate" system. See McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 12.

38. Dr. John Cotton of the Massachusetts Bay Colony explained the logic of their theocratic Puritan system as follows: "Theocracy, or to make the Lord God our governor, is the best form of government in a Christian commonwealth, and ... men who are free to choose (as in a new plantation they are) ought to establish [it].... That form of government where, (a) the people who have the power of choosing their governors are in covenant with God, (b) wherein the men chosen by them are godly men and fitted with a spirit of government, (c) in which the laws they rule by are the laws of God, (d) wherein laws are executed, inheritances allotted, and civil differences are composed according to God's appointment, [and] (e) in which men of God are consulted [about] all hard cases and in matters of religion, [this] is the form which was received and established among the people of Israel while the Lord God was their governor." Quoted in Estep, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 74.

39. The relationship between the two "societies," the church and the commonwealth proper is stated as follows by Urian Oaks (1631-1681), a Puritan divine serving in Cambridge, and later the President of Harvard: "According to the design of our founders and the frame of things laid by them the interest of righteousness in the commonwealth and holiness in the churches are inseparable... To divide what God hath conjoyned... is folly in its exaltation. I look upon this as a little model of the glorious kingdom of Christ on earth.

Christ reigns among us in the commonwealth as well as in the church and hath his glorious interest involved and wrapt up in the good of both societies respectively." Quoted in Virgil A. Kraft, Freedom Story (Tujunga, California: Pantheon Books, 1977), 90.

40. This view lived on well past the Revolution and the formation of a nation around the ideas of a social contract. Chapter three provides evidence that late in the 19th century, the Puritan ideological, rather theological, premises for organizing society persisted and were played off in tension with the new Enlightenment premises; i.e. social order as a human creation held together by a voluntary human contract, versus social order as a divine creation which political power served and by which its exercise of power was informed and justified. Cf. chapter three, Section A, Isaac Backus and Horace Bushnell.

41. William McLoughlin has taken care to raise the underlying social implications that were at play in the Puritan system. By connecting rights and freedoms to church membership and opening up membership to the children of members, a system was conceived which created a ruling religious aristocracy. See William G. McLoughlin, "Chapter Two: Arguments For and Against Antipaedobaptism," in *New England Dissent*, 26-48. Leo Pfeffer, *Church, State and Freedom*, 75.

42. Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education, The Colonial Experience 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970, p. 15.

43. Sidney E. Mead, *The Old Religion in the Brave New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

44. See Estep, *Revolution Within the Revolution,* 73

45. Cf. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*

46. Kraft, *Freedom Story,* 89

47. Cremin, *American Education*, p. 16.

48. Ibid.

49. Sidney E. Mead, "The Nation with the Soul of a Church," *American Civil Religion*, pp. 52-53.

50. See Russel Kirk, *The Roots of American Order* (La Salle, Ill: Open Court, 1974; First Paperback Edition, 1978), 13.

51. Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 27.

52. Cremin, *American Education*, p. 16.

53. Cremin, "Piety Rationalized," *American Education,* p. 273 ff.

54. This transition is discussed in Chapters Three and Four, Section A.

55. *The American Religious Experience: The Roots, Trends, and Future of American Theology,* ed. Frederick Sontag and John K. Roth (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 39.

56. Sidney Mead, "The Nation with the Soul of a Church," *American Civil Religion*, p. 53.

57. Weber writes about "the genuine Calvinist doctrine that the glory of God required the church to bring the damned under the law..." Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 122.

58. See Calvin's *Institutes*, Vol. II, Book IV, Chap. XX, "Of Civil Government," especially Sections 22-32.

59. *The Kingdom of God in America,* p. 39.

60. "They [the philosophers during the period of the Roman Empire] were under the illusion that it is religious fear that ensures that ordinary people will usually behave in an upright and decent manner. If these eighteenth-century thinkers had been familiar with modern China or Japan, they would not have been so confident. It is hard to find places where people are less frequently told that the prospect of divine wrath awaits their every misdeed or ones where, at least in the ordinary affairs of everyday life, misdeeds are less common. It was not the fear of eternal damnation that kept Voltaire safe from his servants' knives or his wife's adultery, but the instincts and habits of a lifetime, founded in nature, developed in the family, and reinforced by quite secular fears of earthly punishment and social ostracism. Habituation, as Aristotle said, is the source of most of the moral virtues. Religion is for many a source of solace and for a few a means of redemption, but if everyday morality had depended on religious conviction, the human race would have destroyed itself eons ago." James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense*, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 220.

61. See Sidney E. Mead, *The Old Religion in the Brave New World.* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1977) 50,51.

Robert Bair, the eminent Presbyterian writer, noted in his *Religion in America* published in 1843-44, "these people (the Puritans) left their nature land not so much to promote individual religion as to form Christian societies...Religion with them was not only a concern between man and God, but one in which society at large had a deep interest. Robert Baird. *Religion in America* (Harpers Brothers. 1845), 99.

CHAPTER TWO

Secular Sources: The Founding Fathers

The patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" in mainstream Protestantism have secular as well as religious origins. The goal of this chapter is to disclose these secular origins. The logic which guides the proceeding discussion may be stated as follows. Embedded in the modern secular state which emerged from the Revolution is the individual principle. When this principle became a central premise of society and when its ethos came to be pervasively embraced, the groundwork was laid for the development of social attitudes and conditions which would inevitably attract and pressure mainstream Protestant constituencies toward "fixity" and "freedom."

In order to disclose this connection, it is first necessary to discuss the individual principle; what it is, its rise to prominence, its social formation and the corollary assumptions that the Founding Fathers attached to it. Only after these subjects are clarified, is the phenomenon of "fixity" and "freedom" addressed. The style of argument employed in this chapter, like the previous one, is more discursive than linear. An apparently esoteric inquiry into the inner dynamics and history of the individual principle occurs later to be seen as relevant to the subject of the thesis.

The outline of this chapter may be summarized as follows: First, the individual principle is discussed in the variety of relations mentioned above. This sets the stage for a discussion for two views of society which are thought to emerge from the triumph of the individual principle; one progressivistic, the other atomistic. This discussion opens the way for a final discussion to show how these two views of society form logical points of contact with segments of mainstream Protestantism. In this chapter, only the rationale is introduced. The actual historical development of "fixity" and "freedom" are discussed at a later point. The purpose of the chapter is to focus on the logic inherent within the Founders' premise that predict the eventuality of the emergence of the patterns: "fixity" and "freedom" in segments of mainstream Protestantism.

The Individual Principle Defined

The essence of the individual principle is aptly summarized by Emil Brunner as a personality "grounded in itself and self-sufficient... (one which) unites himself

with other personalities on condition that it is he who determines whether or not the union shall exist..." The term "individual," Brunner reminds the reader, "is a Latin translation of atomon; in sociology as in physics, the same atomism came to be the basic conception. The structure of society as a combination of atoms is as characteristic for our times as physical atomism. Modern and atomism are correlatives."[1]

From his study of the seventeenth century conceptual foundation of the individual principle of government, McPherson provides a similar definition. "What makes a man human is freedom from dependence on the wills of others. Freedom from dependence on others means freedom from any relations with others except those relations which the individual enters voluntarily with a view to his own interests.[2] Society by this definition is derived from "the interest and will of disassociated individuals."[3]... It is a human contrivance for the protection of the individual(s) [person, property, goods]. It exists "for the maintenance of orderly relations of exchange between individuals regarded as proprietors of themselves.[4] McPherson's basic premise is that modern society continues to be organized around this seventeenth century premise that "to be an individual is to be an owner - in the first instance, an owner of one's own person and capacities."[5]

According to Joyce Appleby, the explicit model of the society which the Founding Fathers envisioned was one in which "the well-being of the individual rather than the mass of society was being promoted, and that the individual was the material embodiment of moral virtue."[6]

Over against the view that a person's social location was fixed economically, religiously, and as regards their class, the individual principle underwrote the person's right for social and economic mobility. It was the right to be judged on merit and achievement, that is to say, on the basis of one's own character, intrinsic nobility, virtue and development. It was the right to determine for oneself the level of one's own inequality. The initial impulse was not so much about the sanctity of individual difference, per se, but the right to be in charge of one's own difference in socioeconomic terms. In principle, however, the full range of individual differences, including religious and moral views (or lack of them) as well as idiosyncratic ideas and behaviors, were to be protected, that is, within the limits of not being demonstrably injurious to others.

Historical Rise of the Individual Principle In The American Experience

Some scholars believe that the view that the free autonomous individual is the essence of humaneness and the basic construct of society is a liberal assumption which came to be accepted as a factual universal truth by most Americans some time after the Revolution.[7] Americans came to believe that they were largely responsible for this truth, had fought the Revolution because of it and that they had come to embody it in the society of their new nation. When they looked back at their beginning they saw themselves within a clear narrative. On the one side, there existed the British power brokers – Parliament and the King, who were bent on subjugating the colonists forcing them to a servile status. As Joyce Appleby points out, "The imagery of subjugation, submission and subordination course through the literature that mark the way to independence.[8] On the other side there were the colonists who stepped on to the stage of history to do battle with old world tyranny, feudalistic powers set on keeping the individual trapped in hierarchal systems. Seeing clearly the universal significance and truth that was at stake, the colonists seized the day for themselves and humanity and ushered in a new era in which the individual could be emancipated from all tyrannies, political, ecclesiastical, hoary traditions and ignorant superstitions.

Many contemporary scholars have come to recognize that this view is an "American" social construction of reality which may not have been fully formed until after the decisive revolutionary events; a construction which provided the nation with a distinct identity and role.[9] The truths which were proclaimed as natural ["We hold these truths to be self-evident"], are now recognized by many scholars as assumptions. The eighteenth century mind-set viewed the world in universal categories. Human nature was everywhere alike. The quest to be autonomous individuals was thought to be a universal fact. Freedom, independence and autonomy represented the essence of humanness. At the commencement of the nineteenth century, Americans in concert baptized these assumptions as empirical truth and understood themselves as the chosen stewards of them.[10]

The real source of the rise of the individual is far more complex and historically drawn out than the above narrative suggests. Centuries of development occurred in which feudal powers were abridged so as to establish a basis for the rights of subjects[11] McPherson points out that the roots of the rise of the individual principle "may properly be taken to be in the political theory and practice of the seventeenth

century. It was then in the course of a protracted struggle in Parliament, a civil war, a series of republican experiments, a restoration of the monarchy, and a final constitutional revolution that the principles which were to become basic liberal democracy were all developed."[12] Central among these "... was a new belief in the value and the rights of the individual."[13]

While the individual principle which came to be prominent in post revolutionary America is not the same as that found in New England Puritanism, there is a relationship. "Puritan governments were highly democratic empowering all citizens to participate directly in public affairs. Although Puritan townships were legally under Great Britain's jurisdiction, they operated for all practical purposes as independent republics. They made their own laws, levied their own taxes, controlled their internal affairs and held their magistrates accountable."[14] In their beginning, the individual's experience of faith was given significance by the Puritans. And it is to be remembered, as already pointed out, that their societies were formed on the principle of individual consent, i.e., covenants.[15]

This Puritan beginning prepared North America to embrace the more consistent individualistic basis of society which would come in the wake of the Revolution. The important difference between the Puritan and the revolutionary formation of the individual, was that the former had an explicit social and religious framework.

In spite of Puritan precedents, scholars now argue that it was not so much the colonists' *innate* taste for freedom that led them to contend so passionately for individual liberty and rights. Colonial life at the end of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, happily embraced many of the "old world" traditions and social fixtures. It is just not historically verifiable that human nature intrinsically craves citizen autonomy over the status of subject, with its concomitant overarching structures. Social and economic changes progressively began to loosen the grip of civil institutions on the individual giving birth to a more independent body of persons. It is this condition which prepares the way for a more intentional turn toward an explicit organization of social reality around the centrality of the individual.[16]

What cannot be denied is that Americans codified a liberal understanding of themselves in the wake of the Revolution. Authentic humanness, came to be defined as free, autonomous, independent - destined for individual transcendence over all

forms of tyranny. Appleby points out the significance of this social description of reality; it contained the power to create that which it had found the language and story to state.[17] The creation of an individualistic ethos in America society was given great impetus by this historical narrative.

This way of viewing the past however, is not intended to diminish the importance of the Revolution in understanding the rise of the individual principle.

However imperfectly, the Founding Fathers built into their new social order the individual premise to which they had appealed in order to legitimize the Revolution. Acting out of the frustration of not achieving parliamentary redress of their grievances, the colonists reached for the same resources that had underwritten the English circumscription of monarchial and feudalistic powers in the Cromwellian and Glorious Revolutions. The real problem, as David Lovejoy, J. E. A. Pocock and others have emphasized, was equality of rights between American colonists and British subjects.[18] Americans wanted the same recourse to parliamentary or representative power. What the colonists ultimately did was to re-appropriate and radicalize the existing resources and precedents on the nature of rights and liberties, so as to underwrite their independence.

These resources, pressed to a new radicality, changed the status of their complaint from that of a grievance presented in the form of a petition to an assertion of rights and liberties which were being violated. It is unlikely that this change in how the colonists viewed their grievances could have occurred without recourse to existing ideas.

With help from Locke and other European Enlightenment thinkers, they were able to talk in the new conceptual language of rights and liberties which existed by fact of birth, nature or nature's God, apart from their colonial status. Locating the source of their rights and liberties at this fundamental origin, put a serious, potentially revolutionary interpretation on their situation. The appeal to nature carries with it a challenge of power. As John Baker writes, appealing to "natural law" affords the opportunity to address "what ought to be." It ".... provides the basis for asserting the existence of universal rights for all men which are valid claims against the states, even when those states deny that the rights exist."[19] "The word natural," Baker argues, "means simply that the law is not the creation of man, and man is incapable of changing or repealing the law. Law (i.e., natural law) is part of the universe and is

beyond man's influence or control."[20] This idea no doubt is derived from Locke who argued that "when it became desirable and necessary for man to create the state, man gave to the state his right to judge and enforce his judgements. But man's natural right to life, liberty and estate was not surrendered to the state."[21]

Whether by design or historical accident, essentially what the American colonists did was to reject an elitist claim by putting forth a universal one. Over against a Whig-aristocratic control of parliamentary power, they did not state that *they* were equal but in principle *all* were equal. To what degree they had grasped and were moved by an idealistic universalism may be questioned. Two answers to this question are likely true. As Carl Becker says "the Revolution was about home rule and who will rule at home."[22] This, in part, is a battle between elites, and by historical accident quasi-universalistic resources that were available at the time were appropriated and exploited.

But it is equally true that the Founding Fathers were infected by the Enlightenment vision awash in anthropocentric idealism. Alexis de Tocqueville observed that "the Revolution in the United States was caused by a mature and thoughtful taste for freedom and not by some vague undefined instinct for independence."[23] Both pragmatism and idealism are present. The critique that the colonists brought against their English homeland was to survive and be transformed and become a central principle in the new order.[24] The "factual" claim of the inviolability of the individual was, in theory, *the* foundational premise in their political construction. From this premise they argued and derived other claims.

The Embedding of the Individual Principle in Social Polity

This well-known principle is negatively embedded in the Bill of Rights through placing limits on political powers, and positively asserted in the Declaration of Independence phrase: "all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights...". First and foundational is the claim that the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is non-derivative or inviolable, which simply means that one's person possesses a sanctity that must not be trespassed or violated by other individuals or institutions.

The appeal to the Creator (also referred to as nature or nature's God) as the source of these rights constitutes a higher source of appeal: a revolutionary move.[25]

Existing unqualified claims and prerogatives to authority over the individual by fact of tradition, metaphysical truth or divine office, were by this principle relativized if not disallowed. "Inalienable" captures the force of this truth; certain rights are not given by and therefore cannot be taken away by the state.

Second, appeal to this "factual" basis of liberty was not only intended to challenge and overthrow existing authorities which regarded rights and liberties within their provenance to grant. It was also intended to provide the basic logic on which a new type of governance was to be constructed. As James Madison said, "in Europe charters of liberty have been granted by power. America has set the example...of charters of power granted by liberty."[26] Here is the germ of the Hobbes and Lockean social contract which the Founding Fathers followed, whereby individuals collectively entered into a contract to secure and protect their (natural) rights and liberties. The "contract" is the device used by the Founding Fathers for critiquing and reconstruing power.[27]

In the end, of course, power and liberty must always co-exist if liberty is to survive, but in the contract idea, power is placed under the consent and management of the people. Power is thereby demythologized. Political power always trespassed its boundaries and infringed on legitimate ("natural") rights and liberties. This was the way they came to interpret their immediate experience and was the wisdom they derived from historical study.[28] Their remedy was to clarify its purpose and reconstrue its function regarding the individual as citizen.[29]

Third, just as the political arrangement of government was reformed through recourse to the inviolability of the individual, so was its legislative and judicial logic. In the strictest sense, rights and liberties could only be defined negatively. Individuals have right and liberty de facto, except when it conflicts with another's or the common welfare. Judicial and legislative power exists, not to define rights and liberties, per se, but to make and enforce laws which safeguard against individual exercises of liberty which result in compromising another's liberty.

The study of law as such was not concerned with what were and were not liberties, but when and where the exercise of one's liberty trespassed the inviolability of another person. This is the original edge of the logic that was asserted, although in principle this was not fully grasped or incorporated into the new polity.[30] Neither did it stand on its own as such. In its political incarnation, the individual premise was

vulnerable to and circumscribed by the democratic principle. Even so, the extent of the Founding Fathers' critique of democratic power is often overlooked. The so called "Madisonian dilemma" between individual right and democratic rule must in principle not be overdrawn. The democratic principle is derived from the claim of the inviolability of the individual. While there are always two poles of reference within the modern state, theoretically, the priority is to be given to the individual side.[31]

The structuring of this principle of the inviolability of the individual into political form, however imperfectly, has meant in theory the embedding of a common source of leverage to effect change in society. In the federal Constitution with the Bill of Rights and state Constitutions, the individual principle was given expression. Even though these expressions were less than perfect and limited in their original applications, they gave the individual principle form. Eventually, members of society would access the individual principle embedded in these expressions and use them to challenge new monopolies of power. The claims of elites were often supported by old fictions which viewed social reality as fixed and classist. By virtue of embedding the individual principle in law, a mechanism is created whereby new ideas, kinds of people, religious and moral sensibilities, freedom for pursuit of new interests (economic and otherwise) are given a means to gain entrance into society, creating a new openness to society in which change is central, at least in theory.

But this "universal principle," the inviolability of the individual, which is at the heart of the freedom contract, is culturally bounded or "parochialized". That is to say, its reach is no further than existing culture permits. It is not a self-activating dynamic principle. Even between the time it was exploited for liberation from Britain and the crafting of the Constitution it was almost lost to merchants, bankers and landed gentry who wanted government to be organized to guarantee the persistence of their social economic hegemony. The Bill of Rights and Jefferson's presidency revived it. "Late in life Jefferson described the election of 1800 as being 'as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776".[32] This is even more clearly evident from the fact that even in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, when the principle of inalienable rights of all men was first stated and given application, a compromise was quickly struck with its radicality. By the second and final draft, the scope of Jefferson's "all" had been greatly narrowed by virtue of Southern economic interests.[33]

What was given to the nation was not an automatic unfolding ideal by which a new kind of egalitarian free society was born. Rather, a precedent and a principle was embedded in America's polity and in its collective memory. It was etched on the soul of the nation in its infancy. It exists only as a resource through which individuals and groups can gain access to effect change, make room for difference and achieve their free rights. That this principle exists in the new nation's polity does not mean that it automatically transforms the character of society. Such a view fails to come to grips with the enormous cost and struggle of those who time and again have pushed back the existing closure of culture to make room for a broader application of this principle. The constriction of an existing socio-cultural world is a given. Loosening the weave of the cultural fabric sufficiently to allow for new kinds of people, new values and rights, new economic and vocational opportunities, is always a struggle. This fact scarcely needs supporting, as it is amply evident in history. For instance in the Lincoln - Douglas debates, Lincoln began questioning the racial boundaries attached to Jefferson's clause "all men are created equal."[34] He questioned the criteria used to circumscribe the obvious universalism in Jefferson's clause. But the actual extension of the principle within society lay on the other side of an immense and costly struggle. This scenario can be recalled in every social struggle, where through public dissent and litigation, individuals forced society to extend the parameters of its inclusivity and the scope of its liberties.[35] The price of exploiting the non-derivative rights argument against their English parent were two fold: one, the formation of a "public conscience" with an "ethic" of individual liberty and right, and two, the political structuring of a resource for change and difference.

The modern development of the principle of the inviolability of the individual in the American experience may be summarized as passing through four stages. First is the experience that one's rights are being trespassed or violated. This was likely not a natural consequence arising out of the universal character of humanness, but the growing awareness of the dissonance between colonial status and landed British subjects proper. This experience takes the form of grievance.

Second, an ideology is imported and simultaneously a revolution is born. The ideology, by its very nature, engages universal categories. It allows the present situation to be placed under an ideological lens.

The revolution, if it does not fail, requires a further step--the creation of a new

social polity. In time, the universalist principle of individual liberty/rights, the essence of the revolutionary ideology, came to be embedded in state and federal constitutions and the Bill of Rights. By instituting the revolutionary principle, the Founding Fathers made it possible to relativize ruling custom, class and claims to hereditary or continuous political power. This is the third stage--law/polity.

The fourth stage follows along with this, and is the actual changing of the socio-cultural configuration of the nation--equal access to the law as the ground for "benign" revolutions within society. Change is structured, as such, into the very nature of modern society, although not without public dissent, protest and struggle.

Just as important as the "formalization" of individual liberty into social polity, is the simultaneous development of a cultural individualistic ethos. By "ethos" is meant the predominance within society of a cultural "ethic" that encourages a person to transcend customs, traditions, institutions, morals and stations on grounds and interests germane to the individual alone. As this ethos matures, society must increasingly accommodate an ever-expanding range of idiosyncratic behaviors and expressions, as long as no blatant harm to others exists.

The strengthening of this ethos correspondingly weakens sociality. It fosters a social climate in which the individual increasingly becomes absolute, and social, public, and familial claims, relative. The actual law of the state may or may not protect a given individual expression but the ethos empowers the cultural legitimacy of what may be described as "I claims". These are claims which need no legitimation apart from those which are discrete to the self even though these may be in tension with wider social and public standards and interests. The maturation of this "ethos" in the late twentieth century is exhibited in an ever-widening range of areas. There has been a continual proliferation of "I claims", some gaining legal leverage while others make their stand on the strength and pervasiveness of the cultural ethic of individual autonomy.[36]

Basic Assumptions Attached to Individual Liberty

As noted in the introduction, the Founding Fathers' understanding of freedom was connected to several philosophical assumptions. For the purposes of this study, these may be reduced to five claims: (1) Individual liberty is a bequest of nature and nature's God; (2) the responsible use of liberty was predicated on the universal

endowment of reason and experience; (3) liberty and virtue (including piety) are not to be separated; (4) a pluralistic and secular social sphere, the concomitant of individual liberty, are not in tension with harmony (i.e., fraternity) and socio-moral cohesiveness; (5) a society organized around the above liberal values is the basis for social change and progress.

1.

The Absoluteness of Individual Liberty

The Founding Fathers' assertion of independence and freedom from Britain appealed to one fundamental truth which relied on an assumption that could not be empirically verified. This was that all persons possessed the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness as the bequest of nature and the Creator. Rather than intending to be arbitrary, the Founding Fathers believed they were appealing to reason. They believed that reason supported their claim that liberty was not on loan from the state, but an unalienable right. Just how it was that nature made this evident to reason was less clear. Those who in past ages had appealed to natural law, had not come to these precise conclusions. The stoics, for instance, who began to develop the idea of a natural law, concluded from their observations that harmony, order and gradation were fundamental to nature and called not for revolution, but acquiescence and integration into the existing socio-political hierarchy.

The malleability and openness of "natural" has been noted by several scholars:

> "...in the seventeenth century Robert Boyle listed eight senses in which it [i.e., nature] was then used by natural philosophers. Of those, the most interesting were (1) the author of nature or God; (2) a semi-deity or personification, subordinate to God but often spoken of as the sole immediate cause or phenomena and thus often replacing the idea of God as a principle of explanation; (3) the established course of things, the settled and unalterable order of the universe; (4) the essence or quality of a thing; that which makes it what it is..."[37]

It is number three that comes closest to the meaning which the Founders had in mind when they appealed to nature as the grounds of their actions. They believed that

> "Nature was divinely rational and man to become godlike must be rational too."[38]

> "The whole deistic movement of the eighteenth century, Basil Willey writes, "proceeded on the assumption that nature could supply what a questionable revelation no longer could, an assured knowledge of God's existence, power and benevolence."[39]
> "Nature... became in the latter Christian centuries (especially from the seventeenth century onwards) the handiwork of God proclaiming its divine original; a heavenly spectacle which, though not now in all respects what God intended it to be, had not lost all its original brightness... It was safe to regard nature as a wise guide because it was fresher from the hands of God and less affected by human sin and folly."[40]

The historian Edwin Gaustad, commenting on the Founding Fathers' appeal to nature, makes a similar observation.

> "The other much-honored and much-invoked word of the age, *Nature*, could, like Reason, take many shapes. It could mean that which was primitive and original, that which existed before the corrupting influences of civilization and metaphysics distorted the pure simplicity of yore. "Nature" could mean that which was universal, found in all women and men everywhere, regardless of custom and culture and conditioning: that which was natural was that found everywhere, Orient and Occident, Aryan and African, Old World and New. Or, with no great concern about the obvious contradiction, "Nature" could mean not that which existed everywhere, but that which existed nowhere yet ought to exist. The natural was the desirable, the norm to be sought rather than that universality to be described. Any word so rich with meaning, so laden with ambiguity, could find many uses. Thomas Pained, for example, pointed out that in the world of nature never was it the case that the larger body was satellite to the smaller: the moon revolved around the earth, not the reverse. Therefore (and in the world of Enlightenment thought the "therefore" was compelling), how unnatural for a whole continent, America to revolve around and be dependent upon that small island called England. But in religion, even more than in politics, Nature was teacher, guide, model, and the proper object of adoration."[41]

This diversity and openness in the meaning of natural, suggests that natural and natural law are not simply definable in and of themselves, but await exploitation for and serve a particular social emergency, apart from which their meaning is less than accessible. This accords with what Bernard Bailyn has said about the significance of ideology. Quoting Appelby's summation of Bailyn, "Ideas only influence political action when they are part of a socially created structure. The Cassandras of the British opposition shaped events in America because their opinions organized attitudes otherwise too vague to be acted upon, because... they crystallized otherwise inchoate discontent. Ideas, to use Bailyns metaphor, compose themselves into intellectual switchboards wired so that certain events almost surely will provoke particular

reactions."[42]

Deistic ideas of natural design and harmony and Lockean concepts (going back to Hobbes which posited the human in a state of nature, i.e., a hypothetical state over against the human in society) provided the language for the Founders to assert individual liberty as if it was a hard factual scientific and philosophical truth quarried from the natural order of things. The importance of this point for the larger scope of this study is that America, not unlike other western nations, commenced its national history under the spell that individual rights and liberty were an absolute and natural, therefore ethical fact; as if they were universal anthropological truths and therefore did not pose a social risk. It is one thing to grant humans the ability to observe the "laws" in the created order, but it is quite another matter to raise these "laws" to the realm of ethics. As Niebuhr wrote,

> "Eighteenth century rationalism involved itself in confusion when it tried to raise the survival impulse to a primary norm of ethical life. That the seeds of absolute individualism were sewn into America by the Founding Fathers is further evident by contrasting the Puritan versus deist view of God. The former is a sovereign God who acts in history in judgement, deliverance, providence according to his will and greater purposefulness. The latter is a God submerged in natural order and design. Robert Michaelson points out that they (the Founding Fathers) were well aware of nature and 'nature's god' but their sense of God active in history was not as acute as that of their forefathers had been – or that matter, as that of Abraham Lincoln three generations later... This fact gave birth to a common and highly important ideology in American history – an ideology which has stressed the role of the free man in determining his own destiny in mastering his own fate. In this view the individual is given an impressive place in the founding and governing of the state and nation. He is sovereign. Ultimate power rests in the people.[43]

2.

Reason

While not providing a model for the modern state, Hobbes laid the foundation for viewing society as a collective of disassociated individuals existing in a political alliance. Locke, Harrington, Bentham, J.S. Mill and T.H. Green, to name a few, would build on this Hobbesean foundation. Hobbes, like Bentham after him, believed that the state did not need to look any further than prudiential ethical motives for the maintenance of social order and welfare.[44] The prudiential ethic was that which allowed one's liberty to be abridged so as to guarantee that it would not overreach its

proper sphere and violate another's exercise of liberty. In this way, one's own as well as one's neighbor's freedom to pursue their interest were safeguarded. As McPherson points out, the political theorists who followed Hobbes can be separated on the question of whether this ethic is sufficient or whether there exists the necessity for an additional dimension, namely a more "profound" religious moral view of human nature; "economic man" or economic man plus "moral rational man."[45]

The Founding Fathers worked out their philosophy of freedom in conversation with this second category. They started with the basic premise that liberty was the necessary corollary to self interest which was a law of nature not to be obstructed.[46] The imposition of external controls over the socioeconomic sphere was regarded as disturbing a greater created harmony. This, however, was not merely a blind faith but one which arose out of a new estimate of reason.[47] Reason, was primarily coercion (as Hobbes' thought), but guaranteed the social orderliness of desire. It did not precede desire, i.e., self interests, nor transcend it so as to displace it. Rather, it ensured that the course taken to achieve primal ends was accomplished by rational means.

In the strictest sense, laissez faire was not absolute in the founding of the American republic.[48] Formally, there was an approximate goal of progressively organizing society around a relatively consistent laissez faire policy. Informally, this was theoretically correlated to a goal of social enlightenment. The Founding Fathers, following European ideas, believed in the premise that nature had an inexorable law of harmony at work within it and that human beings were caught up in that harmony. Because of their dignified position in the hierarchy of nature, it was the destiny of humans to participate with this harmony.[49] The flaw of human beings was the absence of enlightenment and the baseness (not sinfulness) of nature; a flaw that could be overcome because of the human endowment of and courage to use the faculty of reason.[50]

Viewed in light of Christian assumptions, this represented an elevated (almost divinized) view of nature and an optimistic reading of the human predicament. Through reason, leading to enlightenment, human beings could be fitted to live in society, subjecting desire to restraint, order, virtue and moral principle. And here, true to laissez faire logic, such restraint, virtue and moral principle were not viewed as the sacrifice of desire/self interest but the enlightened means to achieve it (i.e. utilitarian virtue).[51]

3.

Virtue and Piety

It is in this context, that virtue and piety were appreciated. These were essential components of enlightenment and morality. They were regarded as a means to good human ends. The Founding Fathers were absolutely sure that the creation of a free society went together with the moral elevation of society and they were explicit in their promotion of God, piety and virtue for the success of their modern republic.[52] Their optimism in human nature was not so much a measurement of what humans were but what they could become through education and religion in a climate of liberty. They were sufficiently in touch with the baseness of human nature to compel them to become advocates of religion. In uncoerced religion, they recognized a force which would serve to stimulate and cultivate the moral sensibilities of the people. Republican liberty and moral advancement were regarded as axiomatic. To the degree the latter failed in society, the former of necessity would be compromised.

Tocqueville observed that "The inhabitants of the United States themselves consider religious belief from this angle." "I do not know," he stated, "if all Americans have faith in their religion... but I am sure that they think it is necessary to the maintenance of republican institutions."[53]

What social historians have come to name as civil religion has its origin and proper explanation in this beginning. God and religion were viewed by the Founders from the perspective of the interests of their social project.[54] Practically speaking, there were no atheists in the American beginning. Religion as a source of piety was regarded as indispensable to their modern project, and for no greater end than virtue.[55] Public virtue had its source in private virtues and piety. Under the influence of the Enlightenment and the study of the classics, the Founding Fathers had come to emphasize individual virtue in its varied forms as the ground of public morality. Virtue had to do with individual firmness, discipline and development. It signified the conscious formation of character, nobility, refinement, learning and moral sensibility. Virtue meant self improvement and the maximizing of one's individual potential. As such, virtue was simultaneously involved in the achievement of individual interests and a more stabilized society.[56]

Free enterprise was the paradigmatic expression of this laissez faire postulate. More than in any other sphere, success through free enterprise disclosed the essential

"virtue" of republicanism. Citizens were especially tested and validated by their success in using liberty to call forth from within themselves (via their own resourcefulness) that which would legitimatize the existence of liberty in the generation of wealth. Liberty, guarding and fostering the right to pursue self interest, was responsible for the emergence of this kind of man which was recognized as the stable center and sentinel of this new society. One's social validity was commensurate with one's realization of these particular virtues. Morality and wealth were fused.[57]

Thinkers like McPherson in this century and Marx and Nietzsche in the nineteenth century, recognized that in the emerging modern world, economics was not merely one sphere among others which was also affected by the individual principle. It was the mainstream of all realms. The social baptism of laissez faire economics as a natural and therefore "ethical" law, sanctioned placing humans in a tooth and claw competitive relation to each other. It is likely that the Founders had a dim awareness that a market capitalistic economy would reconnect humans in this artificial way and because of this, they developed an abnormal interest and hope in virtue. Virtue alone would ensure that the connection between humans was more than a materialistic one.

4.

Social Idealism

The concomitant of individual liberty was a pluralistic secularized and competitive society. These however, to the degree to which they were clearly reflected on, were not viewed in a negative light. Plurality and diversity as principles were embraced as natural and positive phenomena and secularization of the public domain was viewed by the Jefferson-Madison school as conducive of social harmony and good. Competition was not regarded as creating a new economic aristocracy.

Pluralization

To speak of the "pluralization of society" is simply another way to look at the individual principle which ensures social space for different kinds of people. From the beginning of its colonial settlement, America was set on a pluralistic course. The story of colonial and republican America is one of progressive religious, ethnic and racial diversification. While the new nation was born at a time when religious and classist hegemonies existed, these were losing their grip.

The socio-cultural reality was that Americans had to make room for difference if for no other reasons than pragmatic ones. The strength of formalizing the individual principle was that it did not attempt to name the range of difference that was acceptable by democratic consensus or common law and custom, but rather upheld the right of individuals and groups to define and to be themselves without their person's space being compromised or social space being withdrawn or circumscribed. The principle of equality behind pluralism was the equality of right, right of opportunity, right for one's differences to exist and to express themselves in society without fear of encroachment or socioeconomic consequences.[58]

The liberality of this principle was that it reflected a new courage to break from the dogma that society must be uniform (a direction Britain had inaugurated in the seventeenth century). Against the historic propensity to extinguish or limit the range of social, racial and religious difference, pluralism, grounded in the individual principle, invited diversity. The Founding Fathers embraced diversity not only because of the pragmatic pressures of their ever changing world or merely from a sense that they must maintain integrity to their original individualistic premise, but because of a new "faith" in an universal mosaic of truth in which historic differences were thought to be ultimately compatible. Henry Steele Commanger writes, "Because they (the Founding Fathers) thought morality virtue and truth universal, they rejected alike the parochialism of any single church including Christianity... They adored wisdom and virtue wherever they found it. They adored China..."[59] In the *Federalist Papers*, Madison argued that the collision of differences and varying interests in society would result in a healthy corrective; a dialectic conducive of growth and maturity. But it is equally true that most people, in this founding period, had their own parameters beyond which they could not or would not envision this principle. It is likely that this principle is always anthropologically and socially fragile.

Secularization

Giving the individual principle a central place in the nation's social polity, inevitably meant that the claims of religious institutions to fill *normative* social, public space must be disallowed. No more could a religious institution or convention override the individual conscience by virtue of an appeal to transcendent truth claims, historic ecclesial prerogative or pragmatic social concerns. This would compromise

the sovereignty and inviolability of the individual.

By the time of the Revolution and the formation of the nation, two groups of people had arrived at the common conclusion that religion must be cleanly severed from any relation to civil power. The two groups included those who were under the influence of the Enlightenment thought, and those religious groups who had suffered at the hands of their countrymen for their beliefs. Especially important among these were the Baptists, who will be discussed in chapter five.

The Enlightenment school came to their clarification primarily through their new humanistic premises, as well as sharing the general outrage against religious persecution and wars. They held that nothing was more fundamental to human existence than the correspondence between inner conviction and action. Coercion (in this setting, religious coercion) trespassed the fundamental nature of the human make-up. Theirs was an anthropological assessment about the dignity and sanctity of the human which required a climate of liberty. They appealed to God and nature on an almost equivalent basis as references which served to ground human dignity outside of refute or appeal. George Mason's *Virginia Declaration of Rights* (June 1776), James Madison's *Memorial & Remonstrance* (1785), and Jefferson's *Statute of Religious Freedom* (1786) all explicitly argue from the "fact" of natural right and the sanctity of individual conscience, exposed only to influence and argument, free from the burden of civil power and involvement.

While it cannot be argued that the Founding Fathers achieved a new social polity clearly and consistently on this principle from the beginning, what can be claimed is that this principle was central from the beginning and was embedded in their constructions on both the state and federal level. Only progressively did it replace the remnants of the old pre-revolutionary social model. Eventually, the first Amendment of the Constitution in the Bill of Rights (which functioned to protect the state from federal intrusions), came to function as protection for citizens' rights, rights which the States were not to infringe upon. This is why rights in the Bill of Rights are expressed negatively.

The historical context of the problem was one in which organized political power continually trespassed its proper bounds. Therefore, explicit limits had to be imposed. The process of vacating the social space of overarching religious tenets and obligations, a process rightly described as secularization, had been progressive. Even

into the late twentieth century this has continued through legislative policy and judicial review. The aim of this "clearing" was not to create a cultural secularism; it simply opened up the socio-cultural space to be filled in a new way "from below". In principle, religion's impact on society was placed on a new footing, so that its influence in culture was to be commensurate with its intrinsic power and free acceptance among the populace. ("Congress will make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise there of".)

There were of course many factors which coalesced to influence the restructuring of religion in society in this way: the religious wars, growing pluralism in America, the rise of Evangelical pietism, the Baptists (and to a lesser degree the Quakers) as well as old fashioned political bargaining. What the Founding Fathers contributed, in distinction to these, was a principle which could contribute to a new social polity.

Individual liberty and social equality (that is, social equality among citizens) were viewed as mutually supportive by those founding statesmen most under the influence of Enlightenment idealism. Equality, understood as not simply equality under the law or equality of opportunity but the relative socioeconomic equality of the citizenship, represented the Founders' vision of the republic. Gross social disparity created by wealth, power or education was viewed as in tension with a true republic. Virtue, as well as relative prosperity, rather than the prerogative of the noble elite, was regarded as arising out of a matrix of liberty and was the proper study of accomplishment of all citizens.

Through the inspiration of Jefferson, and in the Jacksonian period, this vision seemed to be off to an auspicious start. As Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert point out, this vision of the marriage of liberty and equality did in fact exist and was achieving a level of incarnation in the early days of the republic.[60] Even so, equality as such was not formally structured into the nation's polity as liberty was. No gross concentrations of wealth creating an economic classist citizenry were thought to arise. They realized that the success of a republic was dependant on the equal distribution of power (including economic power) within the citizenry. Eighteenth century ideas of laissez-faire natural law harmony, combined with classical republicanism, lay behind this assumption.[61]

5.

Progress

Liberty in a climate of reason and virtue was thought to be the key to realizing positive changes. Eighteenth century Enlightenment thinkers were enamoured with the power at the disposal of humans when they became unshakled from arbitrary traditions, political and ecclesiastical rule and equipped with reason. This is taken up in the next section and will be discussed there.

The Individual Principle and the Logic Behind "Fixity" and "Freedom"

What are the *implications* of the rise of the individual principle for the development of the patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" in mainstream Protestantism? At various junctures in future chapters, this question is answered. The following previews this question, suggesting the logical connections that exist.

Social Atomism and Moral Relativism

Embedding the principle of individual liberty in the social polity, and the forming of a corresponding ethos in a new nation, was equivalent to structuring into it a mechanism and motive for change. The Founding Fathers countered a particular claim, the aristocracy's right to control parliamentary power, not with another particular claim, but a universal claim that "all men are created equal". In structuring this claim into their polity and into the national psyche, they embedded a universal principle that ostensibly could be re-exploited by any group or individual in the new society for change.

The implications this has for socio-moral cohesiveness are far reaching. Most directly it means that society's coherence is construed differently. In contrast to society held together by monarchical unity, sanctioned caste, established state religion, or the cultural glue of shared ethnicity, unity was postulated as a contract of (ethnically and eventually racially and sexually disparate) individuals. Contractuality by nature is fragile. Formally, it contains the potential to release persons and groups from overarching traditions and conventions, allowing them to individuate their differences and interests. In time, society becomes more dialectical, more characterized by autonomous units, more competitive and less beholden to traditional institutions. Gordon Wood's thesis, in his *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, is

that between 1760 and 1800, the period going into and directly after the Revolution, the dynamics of American society changed dramatically. He insists that "... social relationships changed. The way people were connected one to another changed." The old model of society was characterized by an organic unity held together by graded vertical authority which was guaranteed by dependancy, fear, patronage, honour and shame. Wood has gone to great lengths to document the persistence in eighteenth century America of this old model of society in which "order and stability were explicit."[62] Every person in society was integrated into a particular level of the social order which defined the nature of their obligation and submission. Monarchy was a social system built out of what Hume called "a long train of dependence..... a gradation of degrees of freedom and servility that linked everyone from king at the top to the bonded laborers and black slaves at the bottom.[63]

In the Revolutionary change from a monarchy to a republic, it is important to recognize that not only political ties but also social connections were being reconceived. Wood explains this difference. "In monarchies, each man's desire to do what was right in his own eyes could be restrained by fear or force, by patronage or honour. In republics, however, each man must somehow be persuaded to sacrifice his personal desires, his luxuries, for the sake of the public good. Monarchies could tolerate great degrees of self-interestedness, private gratification, and corruption among their subjects. After all, they were based on dependence and subservience and all sorts of adhesives and connections besides virtue to hold their societies together. Monarchies relied on blood, family, kinship, patronage and ultimately fear... But republics could never resort to such force [i.e., brute and capricious force to subjugate]. In their purest form, they had no adhesive, no bonds to hold themselves together, except their citizens, voluntary patriotism and willingness to obey public authority. Without virtue and self-sacrifice, republics would fall apart."[64] Wood concludes, "Republics demand far more morally from their citizens" and are by nature "very fragile polities... extremely liable to corruption."[65] This is the logic which is the root of the idea of the eighteenth century republican public virtue.

As shown in the preceding discussions, inevitably, the individual principle and ethos were brought to challenge new frontiers. The horizon of the Founders' vision was to emancipate individuals from particular established religious and political institutions. But the principle knows no limit. Eventually, all social and cultural

conventions are challenged [cf marriage and gender in the contemporary period]. In the strictest sense, in this arrangement, traditionally fixed social constructions and moral conventions decrease so that "society" is less an overarching reality, or culturally integrative reality, and more the potential for contractual co-existence of "little societies" or even autonomous individuals as the original individual hypothesis postulated. In this setting, there exists a need for the individuals to bring to their interpersonal relationships and to the commonweal a moral benevolent self.

Returning to Marx and Nietzche, Marshall Berman draws similar conclusions about the effects of laissez faire capitalism on socio-moral cohesion and stability. While Berman is not ultimately pessimistic about the prospects of modernity, he is unsparing in his argument that it has a corrosive effect on those cultural, moral and institutional formations that hold society together. Two choice statements, the first from Nietzsche and the second from Marx, are sufficient to illustrate this connection.

> "At these turning points in history there shows itself, juxtaposed and often entangled with one another, a magnificent, manifold, jungle-like growing and striving, a sort of tropical tempo in rivalry of development, and an enormous destruction and self-destruction, thanks to egoisms violently opposed to one another, exploding, battling each other for sun and light, unable to find any limitation, any check, any considerateness within the morality at their disposal... Nothing but new "wherefores," no longer any communal formulas; a new allegiance of misunderstanding and mutual disrespect; decay, vice, and the most superior desires gruesomely bound up with one another, the genius of the race welling up over the cornucopias of good and ill; a fateful, simultaneity of spring and autumn... Again, there is danger, the mother of morality – great danger– but this time displaced onto the individual, onto the nearest and dearest, onto the street, onto one's own child, one's own heart, one's own innermost secret recesses of wish and will."[66]

> "Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier times. All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable ideas and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become obsolete before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face with sober senses the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men."[67]

Lacking an inherent basis for cohesion, the modern state (especially America) breeds patriotic nationalism which derives its coercive character from collective memories and ideological fictions. "Patriotism and religion are the only things in the world which make the whole body of citizens go persistently forward toward the same goal."[68] This is akin to Mary Douglas' insight that if an institution is "going to keep its

shape," it "must control the memory of its members.[69] In this context, historic American liberty becomes imaginatively interpreted. But this is to stray into territory beyond the scope of this study. With recourse to the principle of individual liberty and the growing prevalence of the ethos of individualism, society is made more open to change. Old "pre-modern" bases of fixity disappear. In time, it is this phenomenon that creates the setting conducive to a cultural interest in authoritative religio-moral fixity. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three and Four. The modern state, precisely because of this intrinsic element of openness and change embedded in it by way of a formal polity that enfranchises individual liberty and the presence of a corresponding cultural ethos, creates a potential seedbed for socio-cultural forces to arise in reaction to change, flux, anomie and the threat of the breakdown of economic, class and religious hegemonies. The loosening of existing cultural formations and definitions involving family, sexuality, gender, class, economic privilege, religion, ethnic and racial hegemonies, so as to allow for new definitions and formations itself, anticipates a corresponding ground swell of resistance (or resistances plural).

Underwriting the autonomy of the individual, legally and "ethically," may be fundamentally antithetical to social cohesion and stability. It may be a formula that progressively devours the socio-moral fabric of culture. Politically formalized liberty always exists as a ready resource to be re-exploited for purposes not in principle wholly dissimilar to its original 1776 appropriation.

Ideologically speaking, America is constructed out of Revolutionary principles. The formation of the Republic was an attempt to domesticate a revolutionary ethic and forge it into a unitive, creative responsible ethic. The principle that was used to overthrow power was the same principle employed to reconstruct power. There is an obvious optimism in this, one which, at the very least, possesses an intrinsic element of risk for social fragmentation. The dogma of non-derivative rights functions well for revolutionary purposes, but what law guarantees that it will be successful as a socio-cultural principle?[70]

Under the impact of the individual principle, over time the socio-cultural basis for moral consensus erodes. When the moral burden was shifted to the individual, the prerogative for deciding what was right and wrong also was given to the individual. While eighteenth century and antebellum America continued to enjoy broad based

moral agreement, the foundations to support that in principle had been removed.

The breaking of overarching social definitions and the eventual splintering of cultural unities may in fact be part of what may be called the natural aging process of modern nations.[71] The diversification and pluralism which the Founding Fathers saw as the concomitant of individual liberty, was idealized as creating a dialectical social context which fostered strength and growth rather than fragmentation and division, a conclusion based on their ideological assumptions.[72]

Social Progressivism and Idealism[73]

Within this discussion, it is important to re-emphasize the way the Founding Fathers sought to inform their "experiment of liberty" (a Madisonian phrase about America's international significance). Over against change marked by mere flux, anomie, social fragmentation and decay, they posited development and progress. In this they established a basis in which the polity and ethos of individual liberty could be understood as having social integrity. This required freedom to be idealistically interpreted. Their new appraisal of what humans could become through the means of reason as well as virtue and religion represented the substance of this idealism.

It is the teleological character of freedom that is of importance here. Individual propertied males, each progressively building a relative equal ratio of moderate wealth (and embodying the virtues of republican liberty), formed the citizenry around which society was organized and stabilized. In this there is a movement away from a *form* of tyranny, broadly interpreted, *to* one in which the "true nobility" of the "average man" could and would be realized, made possible by a social polity that guaranteed liberty. The "eschatological" or millennial outlook that permeated this period in both Europe and America is described by Henry May as follows:

> Its adherents were sure that they lived in a new age. For them Enlightenment was an unsparing sunrise, revealing the wickedness and folly of ancient ideas and institutions illuminating also the fundamental goodness of man. For the first time in history they believed it was now possible once and for all to destroy Gothic remnants, to plan and create a new society, and thus to achieve the happiness for which man was destined".[74]

While this vision did not fully become formed in America to the consistent extent it did in France, it was pervasive though mixed with other characteristics. The

discovery of America as the beginning of a new world order became an important component in the millennial vision. America came to view itself as the last best hope - the land and people who would usher the world into the realization of humanity's true destiny. Crucial to this was a more sober appraisal of human nature (less naively and baldly optimistic than the French) combined with an emphasis on virtue and religion. Americans were the prototype of the better humanity that was to mark the future. Their religion was better and virtues tougher. The religious element of this view is reflected for instance in Jefferson's inaugural address:

> "Kindly separate by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe; too high-minded to endure the degradations of the others; possessing a chosen country. With room enough for entertaining a due sense of our equal right to the use of our own faculties, to the acquisitions of our industry, to honor and confidence from our fellow citizens, resulting not from birth but from our actions and their sense of them; enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet all of them including honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence..."[75]

Liberty or freedom was the centerpiece of the new vision for humanity. And it is important to stress that liberty from "tyranny" did not , in their conception, end in a new inequality since that would be simply to "liberalize a new tyranny".[76] As such, the social structuring of individual liberty was idealized as the basis of achieving the relative social equality necessary for a true republic - i.e. laissez faire and natural law. These cultural presuppositions about the existence of a "natural" law framed the outlook of the eighteenth century man.

The basis upon which the Founding Fathers argued for the harmony between the stabilizing and creative aspects of their republican experiment are examined by considering the presuppositions of the eighteenth century materials. In the formative period of America, the socio-cultural vision was framed by an eighteenth century republicanism. Their view of "society" suffered from rigid assumptions. Society was a by-product of moral-virtuous citizens who through reason and enlightenment had integrated themselves into a preexisting fixed order. Their ideas of freedom and progress were ultimately contradicted by a cosmic determinism. The presupposition of a society improving by virtue of laissez faire harmony, ultimately was called into question. Were humans really in charge of history or was the human element being subjected to the inexorable movements of natural law?[77]

Had the Founding Fathers really broken the back of tyranny? For in elevating laissez faire to ideological sanctity, what resource existed to critique the emergence of gross disparities when their script presumed sublime harmony? Ironically then, the stabilizing element in the Founding Fathers' experiment may have turned out not so "new" (i.e. that corresponding to the teleological freedom). Was this society destined to steadily form itself horizontally toward an increasingly equal and just citizenry, with an ever widening circle of morality, virtue and individual development? Or was this a plan which would end in the organization of society around a few successful republicans; a state of affairs in principle not too different from the aristocratic control of the society from which they had broken? Pollard's insight on the eighteenth century Enlightenment world view reflects this critique.

> "Yet in other, and perhaps more significant respects, Voltaire is a conservative. His rigid view of human uniformity, of a unique universal moral law, applicable to all ages, not only led him to "unhistorical" judgements on the past; it also, in his hands, starkly limits the possibilities of the future. In part, this rigidity is a reflection of the rigidity of Newtonian science: Voltaire's universe, like that of Newton, is static in total and without development. The components are there and will never change, the world has been set in motion by a single Maker, the machine is working under strict laws, and the most we can do is to understand its working, and use it as intelligently as possible.[78]

The Implications of Social Atomism and Moral Relativism on the One Hand and Social Progressivism and Idealism on the Other for "Fixity" and "Freedom"

It is the religious implications of the foregoing discussions that are most pertinent to this study. The existence of a cultural ethos of individual autonomy, a political structure organized so as to protect individual right and liberty, along with the prevalence of an Enlightenment-derived fiction which informed liberty, set up conditions which fostered the rise of cultural optimism and pessimism regarding the creation of society on liberal principles. Because religion played an important role in the creation of the modern world, it was destined to be both permeable to, and a participant in, this cultural pessimism and optimism. H. Richard Niebuhr said, "culture is the foster child of religion".[79] The Enlightenment equally contributed to the shaping of the social order. A cultural pessimism and a cultural optimism are endemic to society organized around individual liberty. The pessimism arises out of the inherent risk and change that comes with such freedom. When individual liberty

becomes a pervasive cultural ethic, moral consensus and social cohesion deteriorate. Society is made to accommodate more idiosyncratic ideas and behavior.

Fixity

(1) There is justifiable anxiety that the freedom that is being exercised has no informing principle or social-familial integrity. In a setting in which the individual principle has matured as in the twentieth century, there exists a corresponding risk that religion will be coopted for explicit socio-cultural ends as a conserving principle. A cultural attraction to religious absolutes occurs. Religion is looked to by conservative cultural forces to provide the moral authority and the electoral constituency to reclaim the socio-moral limits to freedom. By virtue of its appeal to transcendent authority, conservative religion is well suited for the particular "needs" of modern society. This is developed in a later chapter.

Max Lerner summarizes Tocqueville's insight that "the role of religion is the cohesive stuff of a democratic society which has lost the old cement of authority and must find a new cement of some sort if it is not to dissolve into atomistic dust." [80] The problem is, that unlike nineteenth century America, in the twentieth century, the religio-moral cultural consensus has fractured [both internally and externally], and a Protestant relativism and naked self-autonomy within a secular culture has emerged. The social stress created by the arrival of this condition, sets up the climate conducive for a renaissance of religio-moral fixity. Cultural forces call conservative religion to the aid of society, organized around individual liberty, to remark the boundaries of freedom. Christianity possesses an intrinsic moral and theological character that can easily be abstracted and exported for such a social emergency. It awaits cultural exploitation. (2) The roots of fixity may also be discerned in the Founding Fathers' confidence that pluralism and secularization of the public domain were compatible with and conducive to the persistence of a unified moral consensus pervading society. They were sure of this because they believed such a moral consensus was the by-product of reason and Christian revelation, no matter what the particular denomination.[81] They of course could not envision that the universality of both of these would fracture. The late eighteenth century American mind set was confident that rationality and order were inextricably bound. Rationality was the door to harmony with an ordered well designed universe. There was little or no awareness that

rationality would eat its young - that is to say it would devour consensus and unanimity rather than nurture it. As Appleby writes, the point of contact with the universe which the Founders thought they had achieved through reason, was one in which they presided "as a critical presence *outside* the socially given."[82] In fact, they were of course very much immersed in their milieu. Their "rational conclusions" were eighteenth century deistic dogmas.

All that can be suggested here is that the logic behind the rise of fixity may in part be linked to the weakness in the rationalistic assumptions which instead of creating unity laid the groundwork for social atomism which is the seedbed for some form of heteronomous fixity. If in fact the passing of time reveals that Enlightenment rationalism is particularistic rather than universalistic, what remains to prevent social atomism? A similar argument may be made for the rise of moral relativism. When the Founding Fathers emphasized reason as the final source of appeal, as discussed, they assumed that reason ultimately yielded unamanous conclusions. Therefore they did not perceive any social danger in dignifying the rational human agent as the formal medium of truth. Eventually [especially in the social, moral and religious dimension of life] it would become apparent that the Founding Fathers' universal claims about rationality were unfounded, leaving the formal agent to increasingly become an end in himself. This is the essence of moral relativism which refers not merely to the challenge that there are any absolutely normative morals to life but to the more subtle and destructive conclusion that human beings, nations or cultures have total freedom to determine their own law.[83] The rational individualism of the Founding Fathers, while not postulating such a radical conclusion, contained within it the seeds of relativism. Relativism in turn predicts a revenge of moral absolutism.

(3) The roots of fixity in segments of Protestantism and other religious groups may also be discerned in the assumption of classical American republicanism that society was to be organized around a citizenry that was morally and economically developed. McPherson and Appleby point out that republican ideas preceded democratic ideas.[84] Only with time was republican liberty expanded so as to lose its original bias that society is held together by an elite citizenry. The consequences of this, Appleby writes, is that "the importance of citizenship itself is diminished."[85] This corresponds with Chomsky's reminder that, "After the American Revolution, rebellious and independent farmers had to be taught by force that the ideals expressed

in the pamphlets of 1776 were not to be taken seriously. The common people were not to be represented by countrymen like themselves, that know the people's sores, but by gentry, merchants, lawyers and others who hold or serve private power. Jefferson and Madison believed that power should be in the hands of the "natural aristocracy." Edmond Morgan comments, 'Men like themselves who could defend property rights against Hamilton's paper aristocracy and the poor: they regarded slaves, paupers and destitute laborers as an ever present danger to liberty as well as property.'"[86]

This "ever present danger to liberty," which the disenfranchised class presented, no doubt included socio-moral concerns, as well as economic concerns, as the Puritan model of "free" elite so vividly illustrates. As Chapter Four will point out, the modern equivalent of this model is evident in religio-cultural constituencies such as "the moral majority" who claim the prerogative to mark the moral boundaries for all of society. All that can be suggested at this point in the study is that there is a logical relationship between the classical republican model, which is deeply embedded in the American consciousness because of its precedents in Puritan and Revolutionary America, and the rise of "fixity" in the modern era which may be approaching a state of social atomism and moral relativism.

"Freedom"

There was no less a historical and cultural optimism that came with enfranchising individuals with freedom and organizing society on liberal human values. The claim that society organized in this way would improve, progress and advance was part of this beginning and has continued into the present. It was and continues to be seen as the necessary social matrix for individual development and the maximizing of potential. That Christianity with its view of history, the kingdom of God and the values it places on the human person would be vulnerable to becoming invested in and identified with this secular optimism is to be expected.

The probability of a cultural attraction to religion as a source to legitimize the persistence of socio-moral absolutes over the land, is likely commensurate with the extent of cultural change (and is continually fed by the intrinsic rigidity and fixity inherent in republicanism from the beginning). In the same way, there is the risk that religion would become invested in the idealism of the modern state for the possibilities it was thought to hold for the betterment of humanity [religion in support

of change]. This is especially so in those periods in which socio-cultural change is viewed as positive, if not a phenomenal human accomplishment.

The Founding Fathers' model of society may be summarized as presenting three interrelated attractions which tempt mainstream Protestantism. These will only be stated briefly here, as they are treated further in the next four chapters.

(1) The project of building a republic on liberal principles becomes charged with imaginative historical importance. Reinhold Niebuhr points out that Americans came to think of themselves as the "darling of providence..."[87] Here providence is referring to that pervasive attitude which understands America as the pioneers and paradigm of a society organized around Enlightenment freedom and replete with virtue and character. The Old Testament idioms which New England Protestantism once used to identify their providential New World beginning, were transmuted and secularized. In the wake of 1776, it was the secular republic that was identified by these idioms. The risk that mainstream Christianity would be pulled into an orbit around this "history making" venture, is commensurate with the imaginative significance that came to be given to the new nation. The birth of the nation as a new socio-political entity and the simultaneous demoting of church to a private voluntary association presented the risk that Protestants might attempt to integrate their mission and values with the new order, thereby losing much of their essential difference.

(2) Because the central axis of this social experiment was individualistic, there was a danger that Protestantism would tailor its religion to this very principle. In the colonial period, especially in Puritan New England, the individual remained deeply integrated into social and ecclesiastical structures. While the individual was recognized by virtue of the "free" covenants into which he or she could choose to enter and the religious experience he or she could validate, there existed no absolute idea of individual. In time, these social, theological and ecclesial frameworks for understanding individuality would be weakened. Because of this attachment to the modern project and its willingness to employ its religious support on behalf of its success, mainstream Protestantism risked losing its essential difference - understood here as the theocentric and community framework of the individual.

(3) Because the Founders' philosophy accepted only that authority which was compatible to and supportive of individual liberty, there eventually existed a risk that Protestantism's attachment to modernity would lead them to subject their ideas of

Biblical-theological authority to the primacy of individual reason and experience. This was not an immediate threat because eighteenth century reason was linked to a highly ordered universe conducive to the conflation of reason and Revelation.

The first of these three deserves further discussion. The implication of the Founding Fathers' socio-political reconstruction has to do with the inversion that occurred with disestablishment, the inversion of religion and society. The relation that Protestantism was to have to the state after the Revolution was of necessity destined to be informal. With disestablishment, society could no more be explicitly defined either as more or less Christian or Protestant. The Enlightenment ideas, which were most fully in tension with establishment ideas and principles, ostensibly set society on neutral ground. But while politically that was the aim, informally society became imaginatively freighted with significance. That explicitly Christian theocentric goals would be reversed, so as to be in part asked to correspond and be adapted to this apparently momentous social project, can only be expected. In this situation, Protestantism's critical differentiation from the goals and values of society was threatened.

Perhaps the most important point to emerge from this chapter is the simple fact that the Founding Fathers submitted freedom to a "human faith," i.e. faith in the possibilities inherent in humans using reason and forming virtue. In short, freedom was never merely set forth as a principle around which society should and could be organized as a matter of course. Rather, the postulate held that the risk of freedom could and must be made for the sake of humanity (or humanness). It was safe and necessary to take such a risk because the Founding Fathers' anthropological presuppositions assured them of good ends. It is the presence of these presuppositions that signal the presence of the "religious" or faith / idealistic factor in the beginning. This fact should have put mainstream Protestants on notice to guard their essential difference.

Endnotes

1. Emil Brunner, The Word and the World, (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1931), 115-116.

2. C. B. McPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 263

3. Ibid., p. 1

4. Ibid., p. 263

5. Joseph H. Carens, "Possessive Individualism and Democratic Theory: McPherson's Legacy," *Possessive Individualism, The Intellectual Legacy of C.B McPherson*, Joseph H. Carens, ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) p. 3.

6. Appleby, p. 4

7. Appleby, p.15

8. Appleby, p. 155

9. Appleby, p. 15

10. Appleby, p. 20

11. The medieval Christian appeal to natural law, appropriated from the Stoics, and the Enlightenment English, French and American revolutionaries appeal to natural law are functionally different. The former appealed to natural law to underwrite the divine or given character of the government as such strengthening the government at the same time strengthening its own (i.e. the church's) role and authority as arbiter of natural law. The latter appealed to nature, nature's God, natural law to relativize, if not break the power of the government. In either of these the openness or malleability inherent in "nature" was exploited - on the one side to strengthen, on the other side to break institutional power. Institutionalism and tyranny, individualism and anarchy are both risks bound up with the exploitation of natural law.

This chapter has emphasized the revolutionary origins of the dogma of individual liberty and rights. Equally important is the long period of historical development which proceeded and contributed to the realization of a mature modern understanding and practice of individual liberty. For a review of the wider historical context see for instance James Q. Wilson, The Moral Sense Chapter 9, The Universal Aspiration 191-223

12. McPherson, p. 1

13. Ibid.

14. Kessler, p. 112

15. See Tocqueville (1966) p. 32. Also endnote #1 Chapter 1. Also see Andrew McLaughlin, *Foundations of American Constitutionalism* (Greenwhich, Conn: Fawcett, 1961).

16. Appleby, pp. 153-156.

17. Appleby, pp. 10-11 and 19-20.

18. The following is taken from Dr. William I. Keucher's paper, *Certain Unalienable Rights*, presented to the Baptist Joint Committee Convocation on the occasion of the nation's

Bicentennial. On September 5, 1774, the first Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. After enumerating their rights, "they also resolved that they were entitled to all rights, liberties and immunities of free and natural born subjects as if they were within the realm of England... Because they were not and could not be represented in Parliament, they claimed the right to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial Legislatures, where the right of representation can be preserved. They further claimed the right to all the attributes of English common law together with its protection... They further protested the action of the British Crown in contravening the independence of their Legislatures as acting against the English Constitution." (Keucher, 5.) The nub of the issue was clearly an outrage on the part of the colonists over their realization that their status as British subjects had been compromised. Events had taught them that Colonist rights and British subjects rights were not the same. It was this disparity that came to the surface in the Revolution. A Virginia Declaration "asserted that the first settlers brought with them all the liberties, privileges, franchises and immunities of British subjects, and that this principle had been declared and sustained by two of the Charters issued for Virginia, and that under the British Constitution and its protection, taxes could be levied only by the people... The right of the people, therefore, to be governed by laws made by their own chosen representatives had never been surrendered." (Keucher, 9.) When Parliament repealed the Stamp Act under duress, it simultaneously asserted the autonomy of its power, essentially affirming what American colonists had come to resent. Also see J.E.A. Pocock, *Three British Revolutions.*

19. John Baker, "The Source of Rights," *Religious Liberty and the Bill of Rights, A Compilation of Background Papers Prepared for Use by Participants in the Fifteenth Religious Liberty Conference, Washington, D.C.*, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, November 8-10, 1972. p. 4.

20. Ibid., p. 3.

21. Ibid., p. 4.

22. Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 13.

23. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* Edited by J.P. Mayer and Max Lerner, Trans. By George Lawrence (New York, London: Harper and Row Publishing, 1966) p. LXII

24. "In The Federalist, No. 39, James Madison noted that 'the fundamental principles of the Revolution' required a republican government. Those principles of natural right, found in the Declaration of Independence, are likewise the foundation of the Constitution." J. Jackson Barlow, "We Must Understand 'Natural Rights' to Understand the Constitution," *Los Angeles Daily Journal*, (February 28, 1985).

25. The medieval Christian appeal to natural law, appropriated from the Stoics, and the Enlightenment English, French and American revolutionaries appeal to natural law are functionally different. The former appealed to natural law to underwrite the divine or given character of the government as such strengthening the government at the same time strengthening its own (i.e. the church's) role and authority as arbiter of natural law. The latter appealed to nature, nature's God, natural law to relativize, if not break the power of the government. In either of these the openness or malleability inherent in "nature" was exploited. On the one side to strengthen, on the other side to break institutional power. Institutionalism and tyranny, individualism and anarchy are both risks bound up with the exploitation of natural law.

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26. Quoted in Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the Revolution*, Enlarged Edition, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap, 1992), 55.

27. John Locke's use of nature as a state was a hypothetical abstraction. Over against the human ensconced within society under civil-political powers/institutions, Locke postulated man in a state of nature, thus abstracting man from his social environment (i.e. the "individualization" of the human). In this native, mythical state, the human was depicted as free. He thus set up a rhetorical question: does humanity lose that native intrinsic freedom with its rights when he/she enters society? As such, he was able to reconstrue the purpose of power vis-a-vis the protection of native rights and reconstrue the human's inevitable circumscription of freedom in society as a necessary measure to secure his/her basic rights of life, liberty and estate. What is important to note here is that Locke's theoretical device does end in elevating the individual and defining society and power vis-a-vis that abstraction.

28. The Founding Fathers' view of power is captured well in the following: "Most commonly the discussion of power centered on its essential characteristic of aggressiveness: its endlessly propulsive tendency to expand itself beyond legitimate boundaries. In expressing this central thought, which explained more of politics, past and present, to them than any other single consideration, the writers of the time outdid themselves in verbal ingenuity. All sorts of metaphors, similes, and analogies were used to express this view of power. The image most commonly used was that of the act of trespassing. Power, it was said over and over again, has 'an encroaching nature'; '...if at first it meets with no control [it] creeps by degrees and quick subdues the whole.' Sometimes the image is of the human hand, 'the hand of power,' reaching out to clutch and to seize; power is 'grasping' and 'tenacious' in its nature; 'what it seizes it will retain.' Sometimes power 'is like the ocean, not easily admitting limits to be fixed in it.' Sometimes it is 'like a cancer, it eats faster and faster every hour.' Sometimes it is motion, desire, and appetite all at once, being 'restless, aspiring, and insatiable.' Sometimes it is like 'jaws...always opened to devour.' It is everywhere in public life, and everywhere it is threatening, pushing, and grasping; and too often in the end it destroys its benign--necessarily benign--victim." Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the Revolution*, 56-57.

29. Writing against a Virginia State bill put forward by Patrick Henry in 1784 (supported by George Washington) for the establishment of provisions for teachers of the Christian religion, a bill which would have restored many of the fixtures of the former establishment era, James Madison penned the following, "the equal right of every citizen to the free exercise of his religion according to the dictates of conscience is held by the same tenure with all our rights. If we recur to its origin, it is equally the gift of nature; if we weigh its importance, it cannot be less clear to us... Either then we must say that the will of the legislature is the only measure of their authority, and that in the plenitude of this authority, they may sweep away all our fundamental rights; *or that they are bound* to leave this particular right untouched and sacred. Either we must say, that they may control the freedom of the press, may abolish trial by jury, may swallow up the Executive and Judiciary powers of the State; nay that they may despoil us of our very right of suffrage and erect themselves into an independent and hereditary assembly: or we must say that they have no authority to enact into law the bill

under consideration." Quoted in Ivor B. Thomas, *Madison and Religious Liberty*, Historical Documents and Papers on Religious Liberty, (Baptist Joint Committee Archives). In this statement is seen the various components of Madison's polity. (1) Citizens have rights; "citizens" refers to the individual in society composed as a republic; (2) these rights are grounded in nature as to their origin; (3) the legislature (organized power in general) are bound so as not to be free to trespass these rights; (4) these rights are and cannot be safely left without being written down and formally named (the constitutions State and Federal) else a door would be left open for the abuse of power.

30. As is well known, John Stuart Mill, later in the nineteenth century, expressed the sharp edge of the logic described here, namely, the law's reach must be limited by the province of real harm to others. This logic was however already at work in Revolutionary America as it was implied in John Locke's reconstrual of the purpose of political power. What is being held out here in the text is not what consistently was realized, but what existed if only in embryo from the inception of the republic and eventually grew. There are two schools of thought, as James Wood writes, but the two schools are best represented as antagonistic forces--the former gaining polemical voice from the rise of the latter. "On the one hand, there are those who vigorously argue that society has every right to uphold recognized moral values and lifestyles of the majority whether or not their violation results in any injury or 'harm to others.' The justification for such moral laws are at least twofold: one, that the majority has the right to legislate its moral values, as Devlin maintained, to punish legally what it condemns morally; and two, that moral laws are needed ultimately to preserve and protect the very existence of an orderly society and its institutions. On the other hand, there are those just as committed who maintain that the purpose of law is to protect and prevent harm or injury to others and, therefore, where such a threat is generally not present, law should aim at the freedom and privacy of its adult citizens and their right to live out their lives so long as their does not threaten the rights of others, or themselves, or the social order." James E. Wood, Jr., "Religion, Morality, and Law," in *Problems and Conflicts Between Law and Morality in a Free Society*, ed., James E. Wood, Jr. and Derek Davis, (Waco, Tex.: J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies, Baylor University, 1994), 19.

31. In characteristic clarity and pith, James Madison made this point to Congress on June 8, 1789: "The prescriptions in favor of liberty ought to be leveled against that quarter where the greatest danger lies, namely that which possesses the highest prerogative of power. But this is not found in either the executive or legislative departments of the Government, but in the body of the people operating by the majority against the minority." Quoted in Glenn Archer, *Freedom and Democracy*, Historical Documents and Papers on Religious Liberty, (Washington, D.C.: Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs)

32. Richard D. Heffner, ed., *A Documentary History of the United States*, Fifth Ed. Revised. Penguin Book, NY 1952/91 p 71.

33. As is well known, the second and final draft of Jefferson's Declaration of Independence eliminated the patent condemnation of slavery which the first draft contained--an ironic fact, since Jefferson himself owned slaves. In actual fact, the range of vision for the universalism so utopically stated in the Declaration was historically very narrow. It did not include non-proprietors, Catholics, Jews, atheists, women, blacks, Asians, and slaves. The fact that the first draft attempted to strike a blow at slavery discloses that not mere self-interest was in the air. Ideology (the universalistic factor) and self interest (the constrictive factor), coexisted in this beginning.

34. "I should like to know if taking the old Declaration of Independence, which declares all men equal upon principle, and making exceptions to it, where will it stop? If one man says it does not mean a negro, why may another not say it does not mean some other man?" Abraham Lincoln, quoted from "A Living Document" by Tom Balmer, *The Oregonian*, July 4, 1998, p. D9.

35. Moltman points out that "In principle the notions of freedom and equality are universal. They therefore had to be applied critically in constantly new ways". He proceeds to review the history of the extension of these from their bourgeois origin to the Proletariat colonial peoples' slaves and women. See Jurgen Moltman, *Theology Today*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1988), 3.

36. It would be impossible to review this history here, but one or two examples are sufficient . For instance, there exists the right of a woman to terminate an unwanted pregnancy, even if married, without her husband's knowledge. It is her body and she has the right of control over it. On the same grounds, in many places an adolescent pregnant teenage girl has the right to an abortion without parental knowledge or interference. It is her body, her problem, and her choice to make. On the same individual basis, women and men are claiming the right to sell their bodies in service for sexual pleasure. Their argument appeals to one claim. "It is my body and as long as I do not hurt anyone I can do with it what I want". In most geographical settings in the United States, this right has not gained legal protection, but the claim is being openly protested by a growing lobby of prostitutes. The essence of these claims (and many others) is built on one simple appeal -- the absolute right and liberty of the self. The formal polity i.e. laws and constitutional grounding of this principle and the prevailing ethos are of course not the same. The law's range is always historically and culturally circumscribed and less than absolute. The ethos most often moves ahead of the law but is fed by political - legislative precedents.

37. Basil Willey, *Religion of Nature*, (London: The Lindsay Press, 1957), p. 11.

38. Ibid., p. 13.

39. Ibid., p 10.

40. Ibid., p. 21.

41. Edwin S. Gaustad, *Faith of Fathers: Religion and the New Nation* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 87.

42. Appleby, 281.

43. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History* (New York: Scribners, 1949) p. 183.

44. See Mcpherson, pp. 70-74.

45. Ibid.

46. Reinhold Niebuhr correctly states: "But the rise of the commercial middle class, with its more mobile forms of property and with its desire for individual initiative, was required to break the old mold of a purely organic and traditional society and to insist on liberty as a regulative principle of justice." Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Godly and the Ungodly: Essays on the Religious and Secular Dimensions of Modern Life*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1958), 69.

47. The juxtaposition between liberty and reason is fundamental to the Enlightenment. Only by locating within the individual what social religious and political institutions provided

outside and over the individual could liberty be justified. Reason came to bear the weight that institutions once sustained, As Christopher Lasch wrote of the Founding Fathers: "liberals regarded the individual conscience as a more secure foundation of social order than religious institutions." Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1991), 258.

48. This point recalls a statement from Reinhold Niebuhr: "But it is helpful to realize that we [America] have drawn our theories mostly from France and our practice from Britain." The context of this phrase is a discussion about the difference between abstract, i.e. "inherent" liberty/right asserted and attempted to be implemented and liberty/right worked out within growing community standards of justice. "There was, for instance, Ireton's shrewd observation that he preferred the rights of Englishmen to the rights of man." Niebuhr, *The Godly and the Ungodly*, 74, 75.

49. John Locke, who the American Founders owed their greatest theoretical debt, held that laissez faire assumption which became the study of later nineteenth century libertarians. It is this assumption that made its way into the American mind. George H. Sabine addressed the question of this presupposition of harmony: "Perhaps the influence of Locke, precisely because it was less aware of its principles, was the more insidious. He left standing the old theory of natural law with all its emotional connotations and almost religious compulsions, but he completely changed, without knowing it, the meaning which the term had in writers like Hooker. Instead of a law enjoining the common good of a society, Locke set up a body of innate, indefeasible, individual rights which limit the competence of the community and stand as bars to prevent interference with the liberty and property of private persons. Like later liberals he assumed that the two things--preservation of the common good and protection of private rights--came to the same thing. In the existing state of politics and industry perhaps this was measurably true, but there was no logical ground for it except the vague assumption that in the harmony of nature "somehow good will be the final goal of ill." This sentimental trust in nature, quite unwarranted by anything that modern science or modern philosophy knew about it, ran right across the history of political and economic theory in the eighteenth century." George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Thought*, 4th ed. Rev. Thomas Landon Thorson, (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1973), 488.

"'Harmony,' the fourth principle of the Enlightenment, built on the idea of the reasonableness and orderliness of the universe as postulated by the Age of Reason. The universe, thinkers asserted, is characterized by an overarching order, which guaranteed that despite the apparent selfish and independent activity of each person or thing in the universe the whole would turn out most adequately." Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Twentieth Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional World*, (Paternoster Press, 1992), 21.

The elevation of reason has as its counterpart the denigration of the sensual to comprehend the source of human problems. This dualism eventually results in the emancipation of the sensual.

50. "Prior to this era [Age of Reason], divine revelation was consulted as the final arbiter of truth; the task of human reason was to seek to understand the truth given through revelation. The maxim attributed to Anselm governed the quest for knowledge: 'I believe in order that I may understand.' In keeping with this principle, the function of human reasoning abilities was to demonstrate the rightness of revealed truths and to reconcile experience with the understanding of the cosmic drama given by the Christian faith.

"In the Enlightenment, however, human reason replaced externally imposed revelation as the arbiter of truth, for reason now determined what constitutes revelation. Anselm's thesis

was turned on its head. The newer mind set could be characterized as declaring, 'I believe what I can understand.' Employing reason to systematize what was given in experience and following reason wherever it would lead rather than blindly accepting the superstitions proclaimed by external authorities became the enlightened means to obtaining knowledge." Grenz & Olson, *Twentieth Century Theology*, 17-18.

51. Writing of Benjamin Franklin, the authors of *Habits of the Heart* have correctly discerned subtle shift of meaning that America took on virtue. "The twelve virtues themselves, derived from classical and Christian tradition, undergo a subtle revision in the direction of utilitarianism". *Habits of the Heart Individualism and Committment in American Life*, Authors Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, Stephen M. Tipton. (New York :Harper and Row, 1985) 32.

52. There exists no dispute over the explicit interest of the Founding Statesman in the role they perceived religion to play in their new republic. Professor Dale C. Smith, writing for the Baptist Joint Committee, summarized this role as follows: "The primary guarantee of the constitutional order was the virtue of the people insured by the continued practice of true religion." Dale C. Smith, review of *A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion & the American Founding*, by Ellis Sandoz, *Report From the Capital*, (Feb. 1992): 16. The dominance of the theme of religion and the theistic providential character of it vis-a-vis the good of the nation is so prevalent in the Founders' public statements that it has called forth in the last half of this century a major debate. The question has been what status and identity is to be given this phenomenon. Sidney Mead has argued that it is the true "religion of the republic and transcends sectarianism." Robert Bellah has returned to Rousseau and identified it as a benign necessary entity--"civil religion." Will Herberg sees in this phenomenon an idolatrous subservience of religion/God to the interest of the nation-state. For a comprehensive discussion of this past debate, see *American Civil Religion*, Ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974). Washington spoke of "the pure and benign light of Revelation," which, along with other liberal achievements of the age, "have had a meliorating influence on mankind and increased the blessings of society." He was speaking directly to the point of the happy existence the United States afforded its citizens. See Commager, 19.

53. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 296

54. As is discussed later in this chapter and again in chapters three and four, the transition from establishment to voluntary as the official policy on the social place of religion/church in the nation contributed toward a realization of both the designs of the Enlightenment School and the Evangelical School for the new social significance and role of religion. In short, there is interest in the abstraction of religion from its ecclesial sphere for social-national ends.

55. Michael J. Malbin summarizes what is commonly held to be true: "We all know," he writes, "that religion was an important part of the Founding Fathers' scheme of government. Far from wanting a purely secular nation, their aim was to channel religion, to transform it, to preserve the useful parts while putting the dangerous parts under the control of civil law. The idea was to retain a vital religious life, because religion was thought to be important to teaching virtue, and virtue was considered to be essential to good citizenship. Somehow, this had to be retained without promoting the conditions that would cause religious civil war." Michael J. Malbin, "Religion, Liberty & Law in the American Founding," AEI Reprint #123, (1981, Baptist Joint Committee Archives, JK 271, 1973-86). There are several prominent works that address the relation of religion, virtue and republican freedom. One of the more

popular in the mid-1980's was *Habits of the Heart* by Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton. Another standard, more scholarly work is that of Pocock On Republican Virtue.

56. There are many reasons, all connected, for why religion and virtue became so passionate a theme with the nation's Founders. Central among these is that to the extent American colonists justified their revolution on Old World corruption, their new world was simultaneously placed under the necessity of becoming a paradigm of virtue, a motivation toward virtue not dissimilar to that of Puritans' initial impulse. One writer has captured this American world view as follows: "The American nation was launched with what the philosopher Santayana called 'a certain metaphysical passion,' a sense that we were new and different and capable of transcending all the evils of the Old World. Its continuing legacy is a sense of moral apartness from all those other nations.

"This spiritual isolation, of course, has been reinforced by many historical factors. In addition to the Puritan conviction of being a chosen people (shared even by such rationalists as Thomas Jefferson, who saw America as the new Israel), there has been what Max Lerner called a 'psychic necessity' for Americans to reject the Europe of our fathers." Alan Geyer, "Religion, Political Culture, and the New Right," (The Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy, a shalom paper, number 10, April 1981) 4.

57. McPherson's premise of individualism is much more consistent than this statement. He insists that wealth stemming from ownership was, and unfortunately continues to be, the measurement and meaning of individual liberty. The potential to be an individual is proportionate to ownership of property and possession. Individualism and economic independence are axiomatic.

58. Compare this with note #23 (Charles Dunn only quoted in #23)

59. Henry Steele Commanger, *Freedom of Religion in America: Historical Roots, Philosophical Concepts and Contemporary Problems,"* _____ p. 17.

60. Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, *A Nation So Conceived* (New York: Charles Scribner & Son, 1963), see Chapter 3, p.65ff

61. There is more than one idea of social equality. As to the idea of a truly egalitarian configuration of society one writer has the following to say: "A society of natural equals then needs government of unlimited scope, that is, an enormous inequality of political power in order to protect its equality." Harvey Mansfield, *The Spirit of Liberalism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 39. This was clearly not the Founders' plan, which was built on a model of small government with limited power. As Charles Dunn points out, "although equality was raised during the founding period, particularly in the Declaration of Independence, it was relatively less important than liberty and was not associated with the concept of social reform..." "The Theological Foundations of American Public Policy," a paper presented at the American Political Science Association Meeting, New York, 1981, Baptist Joint Committee Archives. As pointed out elsewhere in this chapter there did exist a vision of a relative egalitarian citizenry with no deeply laid plan of achieving it. It existed on the faith of their natural premises.

"The hope of the libertarians (was) that political liberty would ultimately bring the fruit of equality." Reinhold Neibuhr, *The Godly and the Ungodly*.

62. Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), p. 8.

63. Ibid., p. 19.

64. Ibid., p. 105.

65. Ibid.

66. Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air, The Experience of Modernity,* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982, 1988), p. 22.

67. Ibid., p. 95.

68. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* p. LXXIII

69. Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think,* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986) p. 112.

70. Writing in the 1950's, Reinhold Niebuhr observed in western Europe the outworking of the very phenomenon under discussion here: "tragic events of recent history prove that organic and historic forms of human togetherness cannot be so easily dissolved by abstract individualism and universalism." Niebuhr, *The Godly and the Ungodly*, 73. In this essay on the achievability of the abstract ideal of liberty within society such as that held out in the Declaration of Independence and the Rights of Man, Niebuhr observed that, in principle, "the unity of the community seemed to eliminate liberty as a possibility... The unity and stability of the community makes liberty even today less than an absolute right." Niebuhr, *The Godly and the Ungodly*, 66.

71. In a context not wholly dissimilar to the point being made here, Alan Geyer commented that Americans "have tended to believe that [their] nation is exempted from the operation of general laws of the history of nations." Geyer, "Religion, Political Culture, and the New Right," 5.

72. This is the thrust of James Madison argument composed in Federalist Papers #10.

73. Idealism here is not being used according to philosophical meaning. Rather it is the first definition of Random House's Second Edition that is in use here. "The cherishing or pursuit of high or noble principles, purposes, goals, etc."

74. Henry I. May, *The Enlightenment in America,* (Oxford University Press: New York 1976), 153.

75. Richard Heffner, *A Documentary History of the United States*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1991) 74.

76. It is important to state here that there existed not merely a vision of a function social egalitarianism, that is, a view of social equality that can be defined as equality of opportunity or equality under the law, but especially within the Jeffersonian guild, a vision of the progressive configurating of society into a relative equality. In the early 19th century, this vision was alive politically in the Jacksonian period and religiously in the Baptist/Methodist embrace of republicanism and their synthesis in religious ideas with existing republican ideas. This theme reemerges several times in the proceeding chapters.

77. Pollard writes "... the savants of the Enlightenments wish to turn history into a science like astronomy on physics. They looked for man in general, for eternally valid truths about society and for vast universal systems." Sidney Pollard, *The Idea of Progress: History and Society* (London: CA Watts and Co. Ltd, 1968), p. 40.

78. Ibid, p. 43. See also Appelby, pp. 191, 203 and 207

79. H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Church Against the World," in *Theology in America*, ed. Sidney Ahlstrom, (Indianapolis, New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967; reprint, Chicago: Willett Clark, 1935), 597.

80. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* p. LXXIII

81. Jefferson's First Inaugural Address reprinted in documents...

82. Appleby, p. 20

83. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History* (New York: Scribner, 1949), p. 194.

84. See Appleby 277 ff, Republicanism and ideology; also see *Democracy and Possessive Individualism, The Intellectual Legacy of CB McPherson*, p. 2.

85. Appleby, p. 288 and 289.

86. Noam Chomsky, *Z Magazine*, July/August 1991, taken from scan by Harel Barzilai, Harelb@ math.cornell.edu, 9/25/95 14:30.27 page 7 of 26.

87. Quoted in Geyer, "Religion, Political Culture, and the New Right," 4.

CHAPTER THREE

The Nineteenth Century Development of Fixity and Freedom

After the birth of the nation, a fledgling mainstream Protestant consensus began to form in which the patterns of "fixity" (control over the republican experiment) and "freedom" (assimilation of and integration into the republican social vision) developed. As shown in the previous two chapters, the groundwork had been laid in both colonial and revolutionary America for "fixity" and "freedom." Just as the nation was born through the ideology and struggle of revolution, Protestantism in the nineteenth Century was reborn through evangelical revival in a social ferment of liberty and equality. Despite the atomism and sectarianism of this period, a new mainstream Protestant consensus was to emerge. This consensus had within it the awareness of the new character of Protestantism's social relevance. It was in the historical matrix of Revolution, the second Great Awakening, disestablishment and the democratic movement to extend republican liberty, that a new intra-denominational evangelical identity began to take shape. Moved by its own evangelical reduction of Christianity and the powerful liberal and democratic ethos that had captured the imagination of the new nation, a Protestant consensus emerged which identified with America. To a greater or lesser degree, disparate Protestant groups began to recognize their evangelical unity and to see themselves collectively in a special relation to the new social structure and the new social structure.

This chapter begins by examining the character of mainstream Protestantism's identification with America. It is this identity which ensured that the seeds of "fixity" and "freedom" sown in the colonial and Revolutionary periods would grow.

After first reviewing this identity, the evidence and underlying logic of "fixity" in the nineteenth century is presented. This comprises Section A. Section B repeats this approach, focusing on "freedom." A conclusion addresses the predicament in which Protestantism found itself as a result of its close identity with the republican project and this project's coming of age.

Antebellum Protestantism's identity with the new America had two points of contact. Protestants saw in the premises of republican government, the logic of a new relevance for (Protestant) Christianity to their new society. They also thought they saw in the development of republican government in America, great significance for

Christianity.

Protestantism's Complement to Republicanism

All parties in the period of the founding of the Republic believed that liberty and virtue were axiomatic. The former could not endure without the latter. Unlike the French understanding of liberty, the Philadelphia Enlightenment elites, as well as Protestant clergy from the North, agreed that piety supported virtue.[1] Protestants believed that it was the fount of all virtue and discredited the idea of a republic smugly grounded in human reason and virtue alone. Piety, stemming from regeneration, enlightened conscience, the fear of God and the idea of a final judgement involving reward and punishment along with Biblical faith and practice, was the source of virtue and the guarantee of liberty.[2] Republican government was a half truth which required (by its very make-up) religion - a special kind of religion. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century dogma was that freedom was the nerve of morality, while coercion deadened the moral capacity of humans.[3] The religion of the republic of necessity required attention to republican sensibilities about liberty. The evangelicals who belonged to the old line churches, especially the Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians were moving away from more rigid authoritarian, dogmatic and aristocratic patterns. The new evangelicals arising from the Baptists, Methodists, Christians and Disciples were moving in the same direction as the aforementioned old line evangelicals but at a much faster pace. More radically democratic and often fiercely independent and autonomous in their embrace of liberty, these evangelicals recreated Protestantism in a new image. It is this revision of the old line and the dramatic emergence of a new Protestantism, sharing proximate evangelical presuppositions, that formed the backbone of the nineteenth century Protestant socio-cultural establishment which saw itself as the complement to the new governance.[4]

By 1800, an evangelical Protestant coalition began to take shape which consciously began to revise and organize itself in response to the new opportunity and challenge that revolutionary liberty presented. Theoretically speaking, the challenge that Protestantism faced was to reconcile itself with republican liberty and the inevitable consequence of the universalization of liberty - equality. As will be discussed, materially this would involve Protestants in doctrinal revision, especially in

their view of history (eschatology), human nature and revelation. Formally, this would require a turn toward persuasion and influence over coercion. Freedom of conscience involving the right to decide for oneself matters of truth and religious affiliation, would be openly embraced as integral to authentic piety. This required a turn away from clerical and ecclesiastical dogmatism and toward a new perspective in which the Bible and its teachings were thought to be more directly accessible to the lay person. It is in this framework that the reasonability of truth gained a deeper hold on the imagination of Protestantism. Republicanism conferred so much sanctity upon the individual who was being invited to believe, that an enterprise of apologetics developed using contemporary empirical, psychological and rational concepts. Revivalism also shared this underlying republican-democratic imperative. As will be discussed, an Arminian anthropocentric shift was underway.

In part, the origin of nineteenth century Protestantism's revivalism, prolific Christian service work and its central role in the social reform movements, was derived from a self-conscious understanding of its complementary role in the new republican order.[5] Liberty required virtue, virtue was derived from piety and piety originated from evangelical religion. The gospel that called individual Christians to repentance and a new life of piety was recognized as the most relevant of all political implements. The new Protestantism did not exchange the establishment model of a church-state marriage for Jefferson's and Williams' separation of church and state. Rather, they invented a new kind of union using non-coercive implements. If republicanism was not to go the way of the French Revolution, if liberty was not to become licentiousness, then the republic *must* be joined to Christianity - that is evangelical Protestantism.[6]

This new kind of post-establishment arrangement between Protestantism and society was nevertheless still a union and it was this that qualified its commitment to liberal values. Persuasion, reason, freedom of conscience and voluntarism were all means to an end, not absolute principles. Behind these, there existed a more profound notion that the new Republic and Christianity were to be closely identified. Precisely because of this, attempts to control and their theological justification, did not disappear. Full pluralism was resisted because the Republic was thought of as Christian, but distinctions had to be made between preference, toleration and illegality.

Almost all evangelical Protestants were to a greater or lesser degree related to the new Protestant coalition and the notion of a Christian republic. There were of course exceptions. There were those like some of the Baptists who maintained the consistent separationism of Roger Williams and John Leland. There were also the Lutherans who were less assimilable into mainstream culture because of ethnicity and Luther's view of two kingdoms and there were the followers of William Miller, the Adventist, whose apocalyptic pre-millianialism represented a rejection of the American dream. Outside Christianity there were also the Mormons who substituted the American dream for their own utopic vision.

Republican Complement to Protestantism

If Protestant religion existed as the fortuitous complement to the rise of republican government, the same was true in reverse. Protestantism, especially Protestantism with Calvinistic roots, had embedded within itself the seeds of a historic consciousness.[7] Protestantism's battle with "papal religion" had by some been given historical-eschatological significance. When Puritans settled New England, they had brought with them ideas about the historical importance of their venture. They believed that planting the pure reformed religion in a "virgin world" would yield a great harvest of true piety, even so much as to possess millennial implications.[8] Ideas of election, vocation and guidance parallel to Israel of old, filled their imagination.

When revolutionary changes transformed the colonies, giving them a new identity as states within a new nation, the narrative that puritans had nurtured did not disappear but rather broadened. The importance of "purified" government, i.e., republicanism, was merged with the historic narrative about the importance of purified religion, i.e., Protestantism. It was almost a natural and immediate realization to many of the new puritan and evangelical leaders that republicanism was integral to realizing the Protestant destiny that was especially, but not solely, embedded in the historic New England imagination. What Protestant religion required was a stable liberal politic. For them, true republicanism was an extension of their religious ideas and social beginnings. In the final analysis, they were sure that the new republic did not rest on Enlightenment idealism. Even so, with the emergence of the nation, two entities, Protestantism and republicanism – formed a complement. For the new

evangelical consensus, especially the progressive Congregationalists, the emergence of the republican state was viewed as a further development of that original providential drama that their forefathers had envisioned. Republicanism was the formal component necessary for realizing Protestantism's destiny to bring to flower a great social spiritual harvest in the New World. It had millennial implications.[9]

The career of millennialism in colonial and republican America through the nineteenth century, may be summarized as follows: Millennialism was endemic to the European discovery and settlement of America. That is to say, millennialism ("nascent American millennialism") was first envisioned as the potential that the New World provided for the realization of the Protestant destiny. In time, this view was combined with republicanism, which was viewed as the socio-political component necessary for realizing the millennial vision inherent in Protestant religion. Eventually, the two [republican goals and Protestant goals] became thoroughly identified. The secular socio-national project became Christianized and the Christian millennium became secularized. However, the historization of the millennium was the seed bed for a counter movement, predicting the sudden end of time for an evil world.[10]

The period of interest in this chapter finds republicanism viewed as a complement to Protestant evangelical views of a millennial dawn. There is a gradual merging of the republican national vision and the Protestant millennial vision into the idea of manifest destiny.

What is of special attention at this juncture is that this complementary relation existed and that it was to a significant degree understood by the "new Puritans" and those they influenced as one of republicanism complementing Protestantism. This is the logical setting in which to understand the emergence of "fixity," even though its manifestation is measured in this period. Because this segment of Protestantism viewed republicanism as not an end itself or absolute truth in itself, it had little reluctance prioritizing and protecting Protestant religio-moral sensibilities. Republicanism existed in their mind within a greater Christian-millennial destiny. Equally so, Protestantism's self-conscious identity with republican premises, even if not wholly aligned with these premises, rendered it vulnerable. It was almost impossible for Protestantism not to become permeated by the Enlightenment ethos.

Both views of this complementary relation co-existed in the nineteenth century because of the fact that two schools of thought on the grounds of the state, formed the

substrata of eighteenth century America: Enlightenment and Puritan Calvinism. Both exerted significant power molding American self-understanding.

In nineteenth century Antebellum America, Protestantism was characterized by both "fixity" and "freedom," although neither became a mature and serious problem. They remained essentially benign developments. This was mainly because society at that time was largely a Protestant creation. Society's institutions, laws and values bore the distinct impress of Protestantism. Religious pluralism was limited. Culture, to a significant degree, was a byproduct of Protestant service work, witness and standards. For this reason, Protestantism's close identification with America during this early period cannot be viewed as alarming. The predisposition by Protestantism to align society with its values may only be rightly described as a serious problem in the period following the Civil War, when the nation began to find its secular feet and pluralism fully blossomed.

Protestantism's close involvement with the advancement of the socio-national project and the Enlightenment ideals and values of the republic, while certainly displaying a problem of weak differentiation, did not become serious because it did not loose its "millennial" posture. Essentially, Protestantism did not fully relinquish its own eschatology for the prospect of a realized secular eschatology (although its post-millennial view fostered that eventuality). Only in the twentieth century did the patterns of "fixity" and "freedom" really reach their full maturity.

Despite the power of the Enlightenment ideas in the nineteenth century, evangelical Protestantism held the upper hand in the struggle to define the new America. Evangelical Protestantism became the mainstream of American religion. Denominationally, this had two sides that progressively came closer together. First were those groups that had enjoyed establishment status and/or mainstream recognition. These included Presbyterians (especially those affected by the Great Awakening), Congregationalists (that is all Congregationalists who were not moving toward Unitarianism), and Episcopalians (transformed by the Revolution). Second are those who had been on the periphery, or who were just coming on the scene. Chief among these were the Baptists (who would benefit the most numerically from the Great Awakening) and the Methodists. In addition, there were the Stoneites and Campbellites, who became the Disciples of Christ. Also not to be excluded (but less in number and more isolated), were the Lutherans. The nineteenth century is that

century when America as a new nation commenced its historical journey, its sociopolitical values emerging from the end of the eighteenth century. But as discussed, it did not proceed as a bare political-national entity. Protestantism, under the transformative influence of evangelicalism, had appointed itself to become a primary partner in this journey. Much of it, especially the old mainline groups, manifested a determined will that the new America would be formally "Christian" (a code word for Protestant), insisting that America remain and become more like it.

At the same time, Protestantism, especially the new evangelical groups as well as the once peripheral and persecuted Baptists, would itself become more like the new America, absorbing its values, ideals, and the emerging socio-national vision. In its efforts to align the new nation to its religio-moral sensibilities, Protestantism existed in tension with Enlightenment premises of the Founding Fathers. Further, Protestantism became uncritically open and permeable to the new America, both as a project and content. Even allowing for this tension within Protestantism, no deep cleavage occurred.

Making this judgment about the interpenetration of Protestantism and republicanism is not to ignore the fact that religion and society are always acting upon and influencing each other. As Peter Berger has argued, humanity is both a social creature and creator.[11]

The new nation did not simply stand on its new secular feet and commence its journey forward in time. The republic in its first historical epic was both formally and culturally dominated by Protestantism. While the secular premises had been embedded in this beginning, they did not promptly become the consistent axis for organizing society and its laws. Protestantism's initial period of hegemony over the republic, roughly stated here as the antebellum period, can be represented as a partial fusion with the new nation. Protestantism "triumphed over the secular." It remained explicitly invested in tying the republic judicially and politically to Christian beliefs and morals. To the degree it succeeded in this effort; to the extent it fostered a widespread public opinion as to the factuality of such a relationship, "Protestantism triumphed over the secular." Although secular premises were increasingly being realized, the period is remarkable for Protestantism's determination to maintain its dominance over the new republic.

But it is equally true that Protestantism was in part seduced by the secular. By

virtue of its explicit involvement in society and its interest in the project of the success of the new republic, Protestantism subtly found itself deeply enmeshed in the goals of the secular. It was this phenomenon that eventually led to Protestantism's loss of identity and marginalization in the modern period.[12]

While these two dimensions cannot be fully separated, being as they are expressions of Protestantism's basic problem of insufficient differentiation from its world, they can be addressed distinctly because they are polar dynamics. This chapter therefore commences with a discussion of Protestantism's extension of its values and beliefs as the moral boundaries of society (religion in the form of social fixity). In so far as Protestantism succeeded in this, it triumphed over the secular Enlightenment principles for a time.

Section "A" begins with a review of Protestantism as it became involved in social fixity during this period. Its actual political and judicial expressions are briefly summarized in a conclusion to this section. Of more interest are the attitudes, visionary outlook and thinking which characterized evangelical Protestantism at this time concerning Christianity's social and national place and function in America. A review of the positions on this subject held by four preeminent evangelical figures is undertaken, each realizing their prominence at slightly different times during this period and each speaking from a different tradition within Protestantism.

The first of these is a late eighteenth century evangelical figure, Isaac Backus, a formidable opponent of the existing Church-State establishments and advocate of the new way of separation. The second figure, Jasper Adams, an Episcopal divine, unlike Backus, comes from inside the "mainstream" at the twilight of the Jefferson-Madison period. He represents ways in which the old mainstream religious bodies were integrating with the new republican system with its change in the relationship of religion to society. The third figure is noted Presbyterian historian, Robert Baird, whose work fills the middle of the century. Baird's work interpreted and represented the new role of evangelical Protestantism within the new 'republican'-national terms of society. The fourth is Congregationalist Horace Bushnell, likely the most prominent American theologian of the antebellum period. Bushnell's interpretative statements regarding the civil war, reflecting something of his social theory, disclose a serious tension between Protestantism and the emerging terms of republican liberty.

Section B focuses on analyzing Protestantism's involvement in the new project and premises which were born out of the Revolution of 1776, regarding the socio-national idealism of its new freedom. This analysis is approached from two perspectives. First, viewed in light of the secular sources of the Founding Fathers, nineteenth century Protestantism is seen to have been subtly permeated by the presuppositions of the Enlightenment. Second, viewed against the Puritan religious sourcing of America, Protestantism is seen to have in part shifted the basic axis of its religious principles from Calvinism to Arminianism, rendering it more permeable and compatible with the new republicanism. After discussing these two perspectives, section B summarizes Protestantism's problem of insufficient differentiation from the new America and its ethos reflected in three areas: ethics, anthropology and eschatology.

This chapter ends by reviewing an incident that occurred in 1848 which depicts the conflict situation in which Protestantism had found itself, one which foreshadows the Protestantism problem in the modern period.

"Fixity"

Section A

Isaac Backus

Isaac Backus, who lived from 1724 to1806, a period more or less corresponding to the period under discussion, is a telling figure. Backus, the most articulate and reasoned Baptist exponent of disestablishment (i.e. against the formal establishment of church over society) in the Revolutionary period, simultaneously argued that society must be based on minimalistic Christian beliefs and its values. Experiencing a conversion under the influence of the Great Awakening, he became part of the new lights Congregationalism, where he eventually preached, even though he lacked formal training. Like many others affected by the Awakening, he moved from Congregationalism to become a Baptist, where he espoused believer's baptism and its concomitant believer/converted church and the complete separation of church and State.

Backus not only built his view of the independence of church and State out of

traditional Baptist logic, but drew from the new Edwardian logic on the necessity of religion possessing empirical integrity. Considering the social consequences, this empiricism led to the same conclusions as Enlightenment premises, concerning the sanctity of the human conscience and religious liberty. Over against the standing order which existed in several of the New England states, including his own Connecticut, he sharpened his polemic calling for complete Church-State separation.[13]

Backus reminds us that even among Baptists, especially Baptists transformed by the Great Awakening, religion continued to be viewed for its social importance. Religion was necessary for the maintenance of order, morality and civility in society. Certain elements within Backus' position, while peripheral to his much larger contribution, disclose a subtext in the nineteenth century development of evangelical Protestantism. In calling for a formal role for the Christian religion over society, Backus' works disclose the existence of a definite cleavage between Protestants and the Enlightenment at the very inception of the nation. That cleavage existed even in the ranks of those ostensibly sharing the greatest harmony and support with the Jefferson-Madison guild.[14]

First, Backus regarded education as one public arena in which the state was to ensure both teachers and curriculum to be Christian, i.e. Protestant.[15] Second, he was in favor of empowering magistrates to enforce religio-moral sensibilities, such as Sabbath observance and proscription of blasphemy.[16] Third, he believed only Christians who made a declaration of their faith were to be eligible for public office.[17] Fourth, while in favor of disestablishment of church/sect over society, he did not envision the secularization of the state. Rather, he viewed America as an explicitly Christian nation.[18] There is evidence that Backus even regarded prayer as a common duty and responsibility of all citizens.[19] He favored national days of fasting and prayer, national support of Bible publication and missionary foundations, in part to prepare individuals for "American" citizenship.[20]

The logic undergirding these positions stems from Backus' commitment to fundamental Calvinistic beliefs. As William G. McLoughlin has shown, the coherence of Backus' thought is that of Edwardian Calvinism.[21] But in Backus' thought, contrary to Edwards, the pietistic reinterpretation of religion of the Great Awakening laid the groundwork for the separation of church and State. This separation did not mean Backus had relinquished Calvin's basic presuppositions about

the nature of society. Backus shared the convictions reviewed in Chapter One regarding the organization of all human reality under the one God; the Bible as an authoritative source of the truth of the will of this one God; and the depravity of human nature with its corollary of the elect and damned. His new involvement in the pietistic shift of religion, led to his sympathy with the Enlightenment position that church and State should be separate. Religious experience was ultimately a matter between the soul and God. Religion could not be coerced by political power without humans being corrupted.

His early involvement with Calvinism guaranteed that Backus would ultimately continue to view all human reality, including society and the church, as a unit. No human or sociopolitical entity was conceived as having autonomy and independence. And, most important for Backus, human beings were by nature in tension with that divine center of reality, the sovereign God who had made his will known. It was this that made the political organization of society necessary. This is the basis of Backus' view that religion has an explicit although minimalistic role in the civil - political realm (not church per se, although religion involves the church, as New England Puritanism was forced to make explicit).

Theologically, Backus' Calvinistic premises guaranteed that society must not be conceived independently of the sovereignty of God. Anthropologically, his views meant that society of necessity depended on the restraint and order provided by religious belief and religious morals backed by political coercion. Human nature could not simply be righted and optimistically empowered with Enlightenment liberty.

While Backus showed appreciation for Locke and the importance of reason, he was first an Edwardian Calvinist. His vision was not for the secularization of the state with its risk of a socio-cultural secularism, but of a minimalistic Christian state giving unencumbered freedom to religion. Thus he endorsed religious qualifications biased against Deists, infidels and papists and for the Christian "orthodox" religion in the public schools, national days of prayer and fasting. And he saw no problem with enforcing Sabbath observance.

Jasper Adams

The second figure is that of Jasper Adams, 1793-1841. Adams, an Anglican minister, college president, and by lineage, a descendant of the prominent John and

Samuel Adams family of the Founding Fathers, was influential, articulate and well educated.

In 1833, Adams delivered a sermon before his professional colleagues on the relation of the Christian religion to society. Sometime after the presentation of his arguments, he published and distributed them to top political and judicial minds in the country, inviting responses. Adams' mailing list included James Madison, who was eighty-three at the time.[22] As Daniel L. Dreisbach has pointed out, the position taken in this sermon was a subject of lively debate in the early republic.[23] Adams merely articulated what he and other evangelicals considered to be the new relation of religion to society following disestablishment. But he did so with exceptional intellectual and polemical rigor.[24] His enemy was Jefferson. Furthermore, Adams urged the importance of his position, in contradiction to the alarming direction the nation was moving in under President Jackson's leadership.[25] His position was clearly one which represented that of a significant segment of Protestantism, namely, the old-line Protestantism of the eastern seaboard. Unitarians and latitudinarians on the one side, and the Baptists, Methodist and new sects on the other, can be less consistently included in Adams' position.[26]

As Dreisbach suggests, it was the old-line establishment churches that were less in step with the democratic impulses of the republic, while new sects exploited the personal and individual character of religion. Moreover, the old-line churches had always explicitly contended that there was a formal relationship between Christianity and society. The Revolution had for them, as well as all others, changed the terms of that relationship.

In tension with the Jefferson and Madison school, Adams and the Protestants interpreted disestablishment as a policy leveled against ecclesiastical establishment but in favour of the national recognition of the Christian religion. Adams agreed that the policy of the co-extension of church and society was past, since it created strife, division, wars, and tyranny. He argued that the new American way, reflected both in the Bill of Rights and state constitution, was directed at this problem. No particular sect or church could receive government favor and privilege. Disestablishment was meant to end the basis upon which structural inequality thrived, which naturally bred sectarian strife.

But what was not affected, Adams insisted, was the preeminence of the

Christian religion in America.[27] He appealed to a chorus of colonial testimony that America commenced as a Christian social endeavor. American Protestantism and America as a New World development, had grown up together, and Protestantism was always to remain in a preferential maternal relation to the New World. To dissolve this special place, Adams argued, was never the nation's intent in the first Amendment. Only ecclesiastical establishment was addressed by the first clause. Here Jefferson and now Jackson did not speak for the nation.[28]

It was the second clause of the first amendment of the Bill of Rights that Adams contended not only guaranteed, but suggested the new terms of Christianity's social role. On the grounds of this clause, which forbids congress "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion, Adams argued that the general normative principles, values and beliefs of Christianity were to be given unobstructed preeminence in America, a preeminence that would ensure Christianity's ongoing influence over society and its public institutions.[29] Not all religions qualified for this privilege. "Infidels," latitudinarians, Deists, and Unitarians, while not illegal, did. Why? Beyond historic precedent, Adams argued for the republic to maintain social integrity and stability. The ongoing influence of the Christian religion over it must be guaranteed. There existed an inextricable, absolute relation between social health and the Christian religion's dominance over the people. To fail to ensure this was to commence on a course of sheer folly and national ruin. The Christian religion was indispensable to social order and harmony.[30] Without its power to form piety in individuals, to restrain evil and place passions under reason and conscience, to stimulate social concern and benevolence, to give to civil law transcendent authority, Adams reasoned that respect and obedience would fail. The Christian religion was indispensable to social order and harmony. It was this connection between religion and man's sense of duty, his moral sensibility, that comprised the heart of his argument. Only Christianity could make firm that "conservative element in human character" that was fundamental to one's own and others' well-being. If this element weakened or failed, a train of disorder was released into society. From the uncontrolled self, havoc and disorder spread to others, eventually to society at large and the nation.

Adams therefore argued for the correlation between a government comprised of liberal values and the religiousness of the people. Such a government, so constructed, could not survive without such a religion, the Christian religion. "We

must be a Christian nation if we wish to continue a free nation," Adams insisted.[31] Liberty and religion were to be axiomatic if the former was to prevail. The Christian religion had all the right anthropological components. In short, its doctrines, precepts and principles alone yielded a socially safe and beneficial citizen.

Adams reasoned that the First Amendment did not guarantee a secularization of public life. Rather, it ensured that what already existed in that realm would not be trammeled or disturbed by government. Having concluded that America was uniquely Christian in its origin, Adams argued that the First Amendment's intent was equivalent to the government taking a vow not to meddle or disturb that historic relationship.[32]

Specifically, how did Adams conceive Christianity's new role in society? In step with the spirit of the times, he played down coercion and emphasized the role of persuasion and influence. Only by non-coercive means, that is, by exposing the mind to the truth of Christianity, could true religion be effective. The social national imperative of achieving the religiousness of the masses necessitated ensuring Christianity's place of influence. Public leaders and officials, as representatives of the nation, were to espouse the doctrines of Christianity, especially those regarding eternal rewards and punishment. Public monies were not to be withheld from Christian endeavors. Public laws were to protect and guarantee general Christian sensibilities and practices in society.[33]

Clearly, Adams was not willing to leave the fortunes of America to a historical process of culture. He insisted on creating a political bond between America and mainstream Protestant Christianity to guarantee certain social ends. Adams' sanctions for his position are drawn from the Calvinistic premise that since God is sovereign over all human life, society is to be ordered in such a way to foster the fear of, and obedience to, God.

In Adams' view, civil law must be derived from more than a social functional necessity. For him, it has an absolute and eternal quality, ultimately disclosing its grounding in both creation and God. As such, society is actually built up out of these eternal underpinnings, and derives its stability from them. Adams' reasoning reflects his Anglican orientation.

Robert Baird

A third figure who discloses the mind set of antebellum Protestantism regarding its understanding of its relationship to the newly-formed American republic is that of Robert Baird, who lived from 1798-1863. As a Presbyterian minister, graduate of Princeton, and a renowned international speaker, Baird emerged as distinguished author and historian of religion in America. In his book, *Religion in America (or an account of the origin, relation to the State and present condition of the Evangelical churches in the United States, with notices of the unevangelical denominations)*, first published in 1842, reprinted and edited numerous times, Baird provides a valuable reckoning of the development of America's diverse religious beginnings.

Baird's passion, however, was not simply history. He created a historical interpretation which defined and defended (from a mainstream Protestant view), the new relation of religion to society in the wake of the Revolution. Written first to a European audience, it is a historical apologetic for the new American way, which argued that disestablishment had vitalized both society and religion. Rather than endless splintering and religious factionalism, he argued that disestablishment, under the influence of evangelicalism, had brought greater unity. Disestablishment had simply been the formal component for a new evangelical ecumenism. Religion, by virtue of its Evangelical turn, had discovered its own basis for unity.

In Baird's schematic, Protestantism was organized under the definition "Evangelical," which was viewed as the dominant religious force in America, while all other sects were "unevangelical" and peripheral. Furthermore, disestablishment rather than creating a decline of religion in society, had helped foster a new independence. Churches, forced to become volunteer associations, had found within themselves new strength and resourcefulness, he argued. Instead of declining in numbers, churches had increased and members multiplied while the parish system had bred formalism. Volunteerism had allowed the spontaneity of revivals to emerge, breaking geographical limitations and revitalizing religion. In addition, there were benefits conferred on society because of the new voluntary associational principle. Chief among these was the emergence of para-church groups that had sprung up out of the freedom and vitality characteristic of voluntary religion. These groups formed themselves as a new force in response to the social ills of the day.

As for Christian doctrine, he concluded that the new way meant that truth finally "stands on its own immovable vantage-ground."[34] As for the churches, they are made to depend as they ought for their support on the willing hearts and active hands of their friends. Quoting with pride the early record of the Hanover Presbyterian synod in Virginia (whose appeal for religious liberty preceded Jefferson's famous Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty), Baird pointed to the early evidence that the Evangelical churches understood, foresaw and embraced the emancipation of religion from the power of the state so that it could achieve its own strength.

> "Neither can it be made to appear that the gospel needs any such civil aid. We rather conceive that, when our blessed Saviour declares His kingdom is not of this world, He renounces all dependence upon State power, and as His weapons are spiritual, and were only designed to have influence on the judgment and heart of man, we are persuaded that if mankind were left in the quiet possession of their inalienable religious privileges, Christianity, as in the days of the Apostles, would continue to prevail and flourish in the greatest purity by its own native excellence, and under the all-disposing Providence of God."[35]

Equally important, Baird celebrated the fact that the "rights of conscience were no more to be interfered with nor the freedom of worship denied to any."[36] As the Hanover Presbyterians urged, the same premises linked political liberty with religious liberty. "In this enlightened age... we hope and expect that our representatives will cheerfully concur in removing every species of religious as well as civil bondage. Certain it is, that every argument for civil liberty gains additional strength when applied to liberty in the concerns of religion."[37]

But Baird's apology did not end with these observations. He was equally outspoken about what disestablishment did not mean for America. For instance, it does not mean that the government can do nothing to promote religion. The real question is "how far any government has a right to interfere in religious matters."[38] That such a right exists, he does not question. It cannot be otherwise, precisely because "religion is necessary for the well-being of society and the stability of government itself."[39]

In short, Baird urges that the government can never be indifferent or neutral to Christianity's promotion. "Public and private virtue" is dependent on its "cordial reception."[40]

States have the right to legislate directly in the interest of Christianity; the "general government," while forbidden to so legislate, can legislate indirectly to promote religion. The general government is only limited when it acts to foster an establishment of one group or obstructs/interferes with any.[41]

Promoting Christianity in general is not forbidden, but here Baird, as Jasper Adams before him reveals his position that the republic was to be a Christian, i.e., Protestant republic. The document that defined the polity of the republic, the Constitution, presumes that America was Christian. It presupposes, Baird urges, America as a Christian entity and the Christian religion as fundamental to its political constitution.[42] The First Amendment simply represents a common promise not to interfere with that which exists. Similar to Jasper Adams, Baird insisted that the Constitution "was not intended for a people that had no religion ... it was for a people already Christian."[43] The fact that the Constitution does not include acknowledgment of either God or Christianity, though an unfortunate omission, need not be taken to conclude the Founders' neutrality as to the religious underpinnings of the country. The authors of the Constitution never dreamed that they were to be regarded as treating Christianity with contempt because they did not mention it as the law of the land, which it was already, much less that it should be excluded from the government.[44]

From here, Baird proceeded to qualify individual rights. "Rights of conscience are religious rights." "Irreligion" knows no such rights. Irreligion does not include "opinions contrary to the nature of religion, subversive of the reverence, love and service due to God, of virtue, morality and good manners. What rights of conscience can atheism, irreligion or licentiousness pretend to? ... They have no right to any law in the United States that I am aware of, to come forward and propagate opinions and proselytize."[45]

Among several examples of religious-moral laws in the United States, Baird lists prohibition of blasphemy, profane swearing, obscenity, and promotion of Sabbath observance. He appeals to the validity of religious-civil laws by virtue of their proscription in the Protestant source of religious authority, the Bible. Further, these are upheld by common law. The existence and precedent of common law proves that "Christianity is not merely an inherent, but a constituent part of the United States." Disestablishment, he asserts, does not forbid judicial cognizance of such offenses.[46]

Horace Bushnell

Among the most significant American Protestant thinkers in the pre- and early post-antebellum period is Horace Bushnell (1802-1877).[47] Bushnell's stature in this period gave his opinions special significance. His antithesis to Jeffersonian premises loudly demonstrated the extent of mainstream Protestantism's tension with America organized as a secular state and in favour of America constituted as a Christian state. In short, Bushnell insisted on an explicit "sacred canopy." His tension with Jeffersonian/Enlightenment premises was first brought to light by the *Journal of church and State* and by Sidney Mead's research in the late 1970's. Equally revealing about the nature of Bushnell's thought, is a review of his social theology which derived in part from Ritschl. What follows is a broad sketch of Bushnell's thinking on these issues.[48]

Bushnell rejected outright both the source of the state's authority and the location of rights as conceived in the modern republic. Running roughshod over the idea of consent and social contract, Bushnell asserted that it is God, not the people, who invests the magistrate with authority.[49] In keeping with the Calvinist and Puritan position, he insisted that authority was derived from God, not the people. Bushnell frankly dismissed as misguided and fallacious the idea of consent and contractual government built out of inalienable rights and state rights. "The Declaration," he says, "has always operated destructively; working as a kind of latent poison against all government."[50] He implied that Christians surrendered their position and adapted without sufficient thought, Jefferson's mere "assertion of in-born sacred rights and liberties."[51] For Bushnell, there is a Christian form of government and there is the Jeffersonian. By foisting the preposterous fiction of individual and states' rights on the people, Jefferson set the world in chaos. A social world was brought forth without a moral foundation. God in God's moral absoluteness and sovereignty is the ground of all government.

He reasoned that if rights are conceived of as autonomous, whether they be of states or individuals, then conflict and social fragmentation will result, on account of unbridled self-interests and contrary autonomous claims. "Every bond of unity and dignity shivered by the pretentious usurpations of state rights arguments."[52] Rather than relativizing hierarchical-institutional power, as did Jefferson, he absolutized it by linking it to God, conceived as both sovereign and moral. The result of Jefferson's

premises was the retribution of civil war (the context of these two sermons) in which every ounce of blood spilt witnessed to the truth that all attempts to assert non-derivative rights, are anathematized by God. It was not so much the form of government that was the crucial factor, whether democracy, monarchy, or aristocracy. It was rather that governmental rule be faithful to its foundational purpose as God appointed administrator of justice. In the larger picture, the magistrate's position over the people was for the purpose of ensuring the people's accountability to the sovereign will of God.

Morality was central to Bushnell's conception of government. Morality, he contended, is *the* chief concern of religion and society.[53] His socio-moral logic unfolds in four postulates, inevitably building a society politically structured to guarantee moral development. One, the Edwardian Evangelical emphasis on experience revealed clearly that human nature must be awakened to moral consciousness.[54] Two, this moral element existed in correspondence to God. Human moral consciousness and sensibility is a reflection of God. There is a "... grand analogy, or almost identity, that subsists between our moral nature and that of God; so that our moral nature and that of God's make faithful answer to each other."[55] Three, morality is interactive. Within society and the web of human relations, humans encounter God's moral immanence and achieve a moral self-understanding. It is in society that they develop morally. Four, government is to be instituted so that it structures society around this divine-moral basis.[56]

The interesting fact about Bushnell is that he combined central features from three periods of American religious development. His ideas of theocentric government are clearly Puritan-Calvinist derived. His use of Evangelical personalism shows a degree of influence stemming from the shift in understanding begun with Jonathan Edwards. However, with Bushnell, it formed the basis for an analysis of human nature and the immanence of God, with a corresponding revision of the orthodox teaching on the atonement. Morality was to be formed within a social matrix rather than merely being the collective expression of an otherwise individualistic ethic. In this, Bushnell discloses the beginnings of American liberalism.

What is striking about Bushnell's positions (looking back from the late twentieth century), is his hostility to the Jeffersonian premises and his insistence that

society must be formally organized on theocentric premises. He saw himself as confronting a misguided attempt to "get up authority from below" (i.e. the sovereignty of the people and the assertion of inherent rights) which he believed would end in social chaos.[57] Clearly Bushnell reveals the persistence of the cleavage between the religious and secular sourcing of America.

"Fixity"

Summary

There were four areas which exhibited the problem of fixity during that early antebellum period; religious tests for public office (clearly related to the same logic from which Puritans worked in denying non-church members eligibility for election in the common court); public monies for the support of religion; the formal identification of America as a Christian nation; and public laws that criminalized behaviors that trespassed socio-religious sensibilities. These included Sunday laws, blasphemy, divorce, and religious [i.e., Protestant] instruction within the public schools.[58] Obviously, one era was passing and another was being born. The old lived on while the new was gaining predominance.

This explanation appears to be sufficient, especially since many of the above manifestations of "fixity" were eventually challenged and displaced, some within mere decades.

But there is another reason for this development, having to do with a new force that emerged distinct to the nineteenth century. After disestablishment, the Christian identity and Christian self-understanding that was germane to particular colonies came to be transformed and extended to the entire republic.[59] This was facilitated both by the pietistic individualistic redefinition of religion and the formalization of individual liberty within the American national polity.

One might say that Protestantism's vision for America was sufficiently elastic and dynamic to embrace the new era of republican liberty. And here this "embrace," as such, was not for what it was in radical Jeffersonian Enlightenment terms, but one distinctly religious-Protestant. The consequence was that evangelicals sought to ensure that the new America would reflect what they understood it to be. Even though Protestantism's own religious hegemony in the new America prevailed, tension still existed with the Founding Fathers' Enlightenment premises. Protestants frankly were

not ready to read the first amendment of the Constitution in such a Jeffersonian light. Protestantism's understanding of religious freedom was not about extending religious privilege to deists or infidels or irreligion.[60] It appears that two sets of principles were at work. On one side, Evangelicals understood "Christian" (a code word for Protestant) values, morals, and basic beliefs as antecedent to the republic. In this regard the disestablishment of religion did not mean that the new nation was to be religiously neutral, but only ecclesially neutral. No sect or church was to dominate by virtue of political privilege. Disestablishment did not imply the creation of a chaotic competitive Christian sectarianism, divided and fragmented. Rather, it was conceived as a new Evangelical ecumenism. Most importantly, this position should be recognized for its antithesis to the secular sourcing of America that emerged out of the Founding Fathers' Enlightenment premises.

Nineteenth century evangelical Protestantism attempted to ensconce the new liberal republican project in predetermined religious fixtures, and to a significant degree succeeded.[61] As such, the new liberty was politically and culturally in the grip of Protestant definitions (just as Protestantism was no less in the grip of republicanism). Sydney Mead captures the tension in this early period of the republic.

> "There is no simple way to do justice to the nuances of difference between those McLoughlin calls the Evangelical separationists and rationalist-humanists. But their significant difference was in their respective views of the kind of commonwealth that was being born. As stated by McLoughlin, Jefferson and Madison envisaged the creation of 'a secular state with "a high wall of separation" to keep religion at bay.' These men 'explicitly denied that America was or should be a Christian nation,' while 'Backus and the Baptists wanted to separate church and State in order to create a truly Christian state'--assuming, as did 'most nineteenth century Evangelicals' after them, 'that America was not only a Christian nation but a Protestant one.' In the Courts this difference appeared in the question whether Christianity was, following English precedent, part of the common law. Jefferson flatly denied this. Evangelicals assumed and affirmed that it was. In my jargon, the Jeffersonians were 'outsiders' and the Evangelicals were 'insiders' with a typical Thwackum syndrome, and with Parson Thwackum's addendum that honor and morals were 'dependent upon this religion; and is consistent with and dependent upon no other.'

Mead continues,

> "McLoughlin concisely summarizes the results of the dominance of this evangelical perspective: Few nineteenth century evangelicals saw any inconsistency in supporting laws to enforce the Protestant Sabbath or

prohibition, laws against blasphemy and profanity, laws against lotteries, gambling, theater-going, dancing, and ultimately, against the teaching of evolution."[62]

Section B

"Freedom"

From the colonial period through the national constitutive period, religion's relationship to society was formulated in three different ways: New England-Puritan model, the Roger Williams-Baptist model and the Enlightenment model. While there are other variations, (cf. Isaac Backus which is between the first and second of these), it is these three that are the primary contributors, informing mainstream development in this area. It is the contrast between the configuration of the Puritan model of the society-religion relation and the Founding Fathers' model that discloses why "freedom," i.e., integration and assimilation, occurred. As "society" began to change under the influence of new Enlightenment ideas, mainstream Protestant churches' relation to society would subtly change, ultimately leading to a new identification between Protestantism and the modern republic - its premises and ethos.

The Founding Fathers conceptually reorganized society using both eighteenth century Enlightenment ideas, effecting in principle and polity a religio-social inversion. Puritanism had organized society around religion. The Founding Fathers emancipated society from the yoke of established religion and called religion into an informal subservience to social-republican interests. As already discussed, there existed an underlying presuppositional tension between these two.

Calvin's impulse to bring all spheres of fallen human existence under the sovereignty of God necessitated a formal religious correlation of society to the transcendent biblical God. This required the "co-ordination" of church and state. Puritanism revolved on a theocentric axis, one which informed both its social building and social ordering. In post-revolutionary America, new Enlightenment ideas were drawn upon in the political reorganization of society. In this setting, the basic premises were anthropological, not theological. But in America, this did result in the exclusion of God and religion; these were not antithetical (as claimed in the French Revolution) but they were inverted.

As introduced, the deistic-Enlightenment presuppositions of the Founding

Fathers necessitated that God and religion were to be correlated to republican society, albeit informally. This precedent in part set the stage for Christianity to be aligned in support of national liberal democratic ideals and goals.

In order to understand this, it is important to return to the Enlightenment premises of America's national beginning. In America, English and French Enlightenment ideas were ostensibly distilled for political ends, not to challenge or displace ecclesiastical organizations. In Europe, especially France, Enlightenment ideas also posed an explicitly religious challenge. The irony is that America's involvement was so precise and limited.

However, from one perspective this may not in fact be the case. American colonists appropriated Enlightenment ideas with relative unanimity and ease, polemicizing the political situation with their mother country. For the most part the mainline denominations, with the exception of the Anglican clergy, supported the Revolution and were relatively at ease with the political ideas of freedom and democracy. Even Puritans, as Andrew C. McLoughlin points out, had within their tradition resources that were relatively compatible, if not contributory, to the new political concepts.[63]

When the revolutionaries radicalized individual right and autonomy, making them into critical implements to polemicize political institutions, they simultaneously impregnated their republican projects with seeds taken from the Enlightenment's anthropological vision. In principle, these ideas were as much a threat to traditional religious conventions and institutions as to traditional political conventions and institutions.

As Martin Marty has argued in his book, *The Infidels*, there was a militant effort in America to extend Enlightenment ideas beyond mere political critique to the existing Protestant denominations (the Catholic minority not excluded).[64] The ideological heart of this attack was aimed at these institutions and their conventions in general, because they were seen as the organizing catalyst for human beings under heteronomous authorities that ultimately derived their power from tradition and the ecclesiastical control of the Bible. At bottom, their religious logic was built on the premise that human dignity disallowed the pre-eminence of any tradition, truth claim, convention or institution, be it political or religious. True humanness necessitated an unqualified autonomy. The enlightened use of reason qualified political and religious

subservience and disallowed participation in systems that required it.

This small militant development achieved notoriety approximately a decade after the Revolution, lasting to around the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century. The movement was best known for three leaders, Thomas Paine, author of *The Age of Reason* (1794), and *The Rights of Man,* Ethan Allen author of *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man* (1784), and Elihu Palmer, a blind Baptist preacher turned apostle and organizer of deistic societies. These men and those who identified with them and their works, represent a radical extreme which never succeeded in its mission.[65]

The mainline churches of American Protestantism had enjoyed nearly two-hundred years of cultural development. They were part of the "texture of America,"[66] If the ideas of the Enlightenment were to gain entrance and affect American religion, it would not come as Thomas Paine hoped, through frontal assault. As Benjamin Franklin said to a friend, to challenge the churches was to "spit into the wind."[67] But while this movement failed, it was important because it put on display in an explicit manner the relationship between Enlightenment premises and religion in society. Human-social development was preeminent and religion was placed in its service. The attack that militant deism leveled at existing Christian institutions as priestcraft and ecclesiastical tyranny, corresponds to its doctrinal revision. The Enlightenment provided a basis to challenge all claims located totally outside the individual. Reason and experience gave individuals the justification to repeal claims which established themselves on tradition, convention, metaphysics or revelation alone. In harmony with this anthropological appraisal, deists revised their inherited Judeo-Christian religion.

On the other side of this Enlightenment anthropological and epistemological shift, they approached God, Jesus, biblical miracles and morality. The transcendence of the sovereign God was abstracted into an absolute designer so that God's personal involvement with humans was lost. This made way for the autonomy of reason and a design or rationality immanent and accessible within the laws of nature and experience. In moderate deism, Jesus remained as the premier teacher of humanity providing exceptional insight into universal ethics and moral leadership. Even ideas of Jesus' partial uniqueness were plausible. The Bible as revelation was only problematic if revelation claimed for itself something ultimately not accessible in principle by pure reason. Humanity was not viewed as complete in its native state.

Through the use of reason and the formation of virtue, the dignity and nobility that was humanity's destiny could be realized. This destiny was viewed within both a secular and eternal framework, revealing deism's fusion of the Enlightenment's high anthropology with Christian categories of immortality. Religion, science, and education, in a climate of liberty, were the sources of good human social development. Tyranny of tradition, social aristocracy, political absolutism, priestcraft and established religions, held humans back from the development which was their God given human birth right. Every doctrinal revision and every reform deism called for, could be correlated more or less radically to its new anthropological appraisal. This was its standard for revision.

But American religion, in the larger picture, was not directly revolutionized by deism as a doctrinal revision and institutional challenge. Neither was Unitarianism to carry the Enlightenment premises into the mainstream. Rather, it was the benign deism of the Founding Fathers that disclosed how religion subtly assumed a partially new role and position regarding the new world.

The primary statesmen, the social-political artisans of the new nation, were thoroughly steeped in Enlightenment and classical republican thinking. Most of these men, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and to some degree, John Adams, James Madison and George Madson, were deistic in their thinking.[68] According to Catherine L. Albanese, fifty-two out of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were members of the Masonic temple, an organization that was permeated with "benign" deistic thinking.[69] But unlike Paine, Palmer and Allen, these men were not militantly antagonistic to organized religion.

Jefferson idealistically thought that in time the primary religion would be Unitarian, since it was in his opinion the most rationally true.[70] And in an open climate truth would triumph. Even so, Jefferson was Episcopalian in background and not outwardly antagonistic to the churches.

Benjamin Franklin, thoroughly deistic in his thinking, supported all sects, giving them money and courting their approbation with qualified praise for their role in fostering virtue and morality, while remaining reverently agnostic toward many doctrines. The attitude of all these leading statesmen was to encourage the free exercise of religion, not simply out of loyalty to their principles of equality and liberty

for all individuals and sects, but because they saw religion as axiomatic to morality and virtue. Religion served to underwrite the political venture of reorganizing society on individual freedom. Their idealistic social and anthropological interests were paramount, and religion was correlative to that.

Puritanism had placed society in relation to religion. Deism inverted this relation. If the Founding Fathers' basic deistic orientation is overlooked, this inversion is obscured. On the one hand, deism had familiarized them with the validity of this inversion, and on the other hand, their political reorganization of society around freedom and equality was itself freighted with Enlightenment idealism.

In other words, the eventuality of the modern state possessed an intrinsic "religious" element. A humanitarian idealism was informally and imaginatively part of its beginnings. As an entity and as an embodiment of ideals, the Founding Fathers' creation of the modern state was elevated to historical humanitarian importance. As such, it was in part viewed "religiously".[71] The fact that they openly and explicitly invited the churches and religions (and God in general) into a supportive relationship to their republican project, disclosed their familiarity with deistic Enlightenment presuppositions which elevate human and social ends. The early Puritan divines, steeped in Calvin's theocentric world view, would no doubt have sharply anathematized this inversion. As it was, many of the Puritan divines of the Revolutionary period, while ultimately at variance with the humanistic base of the social contract theory, were in serious conversation and sympathy with it.

It was through the Revolutionary victory and subsequent political restructuring of the nation around republican values, that the deistic inversion between religion and society infected mainstream Protestantism.[72] While the Founding Statesmen consciously clarified their own underlying presuppositions, their role allowed them a formative and pervasive influence. As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, society moved from the position of being organized around religious interests to one in which religious interests became increasingly identified with and subserviant to social-"secular" interests.[73] On the transition from distinctively Christian goals toward social-civilization goals in nineteenth century Protestant America, Robert Handy makes the following statement:

> "In the earlier period, the priority of the religious vision was strongly and widely maintained; it was Christianity and civilization, Christianity as the

> best part of civilization and its hope. In the latter part of the century, however, in most cases unconsciously, much of the real focus had shifted to the civilization itself, with Christianity and the Churches finding their significance in relation to it. Civilization itself was given an increasingly positive assessment, chiefly because it was understood to have absorbed much of the spirit of Christianity."[74]

Mainstream Protestantism became susceptible to this deistic inversion by being transformed through evangelicalism and disestablishment. The termination of the religious hegemony, which disestablishment formalized, simultaneously signaled the emancipation and independence of society. Society was viewed as an autonomous good, a project with its own legitimate ends and goals. Neither old-line Calvinism (by far the strongest religious force in the colonial period), nor the radical and liberal stirrings of religion more directly under the revisionary influence of the Enlightenment, were to advance to be central in the nineteenth century. Rather it was to be a "new" Protestantism that was emerging under the transformative influence of the Great Awakenings. These Awakenings ensured that the Protestant character of the country would not simply be dissolved by an Enlightenment movement that evolved from a political to religious agenda.

But the "evangelicalization" of Protestantism (shifting the religious center from doctrine and authority to experience and the individual), while allowing Protestantism to survive and prosper in a new era of individualism, liberty and pluralism, also rendered it more vulnerable to permeation by the spirit and logic of that era. Under the impact of evangelicalism, Protestantism became synthetic, taking into itself the republican-liberal vision, a vision which involved the "deistic inversion."[75]

In the nineteenth century, America was just beginning to become fully self conscious of its identity as a republic. Its ideas of individualism and republican liberty took on a formative democratic character due to the struggle for independence against the resistance of the frontier and the British. America's self-understanding was in part formed from its myth of resourcefulness. Freedom and the power to change destiny were essential to American identity. As Winthrop Hudson and Perry Miller, as well as William G. McLoughlin emphasize, the theology of determinism and divine sovereignty was on a collision course with the national consciousness.

The new theology of the second Great Awakening, which would dominate

nineteenth century Protestantism and America, would be more Arminian than Calvinistic in essential character.[76] It is this theology, mediated through evangelical revivalism, that would envelop democracy, not the Jeffersonian humanistic strain. Between 1800 and the beginning of the Civil War, Protestantism subdued and dominated the new republic, becoming fully identified and fused with it. It was permeated by national ideas of change and progress, while understanding itself as the primary ordering principle necessary for republican liberty.

The new evangelical ideas of change, Perry Miller states, were a "complete uprooting of the historic conceptions of American Protestantism, so profound a reading of new meaning into the age of revival that it is in effect a declaration of evangelical independence."[77] Over against the lament of sinners that they are sinners and cannot help themselves, Charles Finney crafted a theology "wholly American." "Everybody can help it," he argued. "All men may be saved if they will." "Don't wait for feeling to do it." At the heart of Finney's theology, was the "hatred for any form of the Protestant notion that Christian obedience is in any way 'imputed' to believers; that without it and before it they are enslaved in the toils of inability."[78] Finney and his fellow Congregationalist, Methodist, and even Baptist evangelists, literally *decided* on revival and human change. Employing their methods, they created a new arena of social agency, derived from the piety which had been called into existence from revival conversions.

This concept of change was not merely individual, although individual piety sparked by the passion of revival was the source. Revival explicitly defined and promoted national ends; even though individual salvation of sinners was ostensibly the first goal.[79] As Perry Miller's research has shown, revivalism set its sights on providing the unitive and transforming basis of the new republic. It became explicitly and openly aligned with the fortunes and future of America, taking to itself the charge and responsibility of what the republic was and was to become. Revival preaching aimed at the community and sought to close the gap of inclusivity. It was not merely at the unrepentant elect (who were found among the many here and there) that the revival was aimed. The scope of the revival was to save entire communities. The aim of the revival was sectional and communal in character, ultimately envisioning national and millennial horizons. As Bull and Lockhart point out, "In the second Great Awakening, revivalists called for conversion and reformation of Character to

achieve perfection of society and participate in earthly millennium..."[80]

There was a "mainstreaming of "puritan piety" to conquer and change the whole, not just the select ecclesial center of society. Revival sought to regenerate, not mere individuals, but entire aggregates of people. It focused on the heart. It was a new form of evangelical universalism, shaped not out of doctrinal agreement but the practical life changing effects that came in the wake of revival. Doctrinal differences increasingly became moot.

Most importantly, this unity was interpreted as the true fulfillment of the First Amendment's goal. Rather than a strident and divided sectarianism, a new Protestant pluralism was heralded, one which united America on the practical and pietistic essence of the Christian religion. Religion was creating the unitive cultural fabric of the nation. The universal dominance of the church over society, the Protestant goal in the colonial period, was replaced by a new goal in the national period, namely, the universal cultural presence of the Protestant religion of evangelical piety and morals in society at large.

The transformative goals of nineteenth century evangelical revivalism were ultimately focused on America. Whereas the church and sects of seventeenth and eighteenth century America functioned as the stable religious social center of a given geographical area or settlement, evangelical revivalism enlisted the sects in a common mission to move the new republic to its proper destiny. The openly-acclaimed goal was one in which republican liberty was employed for its possibilities for good, i.e. national-social ends.[81] Does freedom promote social ill or good? Evangelicalism was out to prove the latter. Its goal was to ensure that republican freedom did not simply degenerate into a fragmented social morass of self interest. Its antidote was to introduce evangelical piety into the equation of republican liberty. This would yield remarkable social and national results.

Revival called forth new spiritual impulses. It was a source of individual piety. This new piety was then channeled into action via associations, voluntary societies and institutions directed toward the transformation of society. This transmission of piety resulted in "not only the Sunday school but programs for the salvation of seamen, prison reform, relief of the poor, asylums for the insane, the deaf and dumb, the blind."[82] This social phenomenon was not merely the result of the "James' Christian imperative" that "faith without work is dead." It was religion

channeled directly into the secular sphere with the explicit object of regenerating and remaking society. America itself was the goal, the shaping of a model nation or "national epistle." America became Protestantism's mission.

The same freedom that made possible the pursuit of self-interest and wealth, supported a religious system that returned the revenues of self-interest back to society. Revival created piety and piety led to benevolence. Transcending self interest was referred to as "benevolent" and came to be synonymous with "Christian." The end-product of religion was considered to be a "sublime" elevated harmonious and happy society, replete with piety and the resultant good social works that flowed from piety. In religious terms, this was the goal referred to in the Bible as that which necessarily preceded and brought the millennium. Nineteenth- century Protestantism, intoxicated with its power to change, embraced the millennium, not as a somber threat of apocalyptic judgment, but as a task achievable as never before under the new conditions and premises of republican liberty and Protestants' new keys to human and social change.[83]

Americans believed that they had changed and that change was possible. Republican government which vouchsafed religious and economic liberty was the necessary context out of which change and advancement occurred. That evangelicalism's model of change was in part captive to nineteenth century republicanism is not surprising. Given Arminian premises, Protestantism could only progress deeper into a fusion with its culture. As Handy writes:

> "They [mainstream Protestants] also failed to see how their attachment to an idealized America was having a reverse impact upon them. Their religion was becoming more and more patterned after culture. In Smylie's words 'instead of Christianizing the nation, the churches have been nationalized.'"[84]

Pietistic ideas, while possessing an authentic richness, were preoccupied more by personal vice and relief of the poor. As Perry Miller states, temperance was the paradigmatic reform.[85] It almost perfectly reflected the premises upon which it was actuated. By appealing for temperance, the individual was being called to personal change, while at the same time the benefits of becoming sober were conferred upon society at large.

"Freedom"

Summary

Protestantism saw itself as integral to America as a socio-political project. This required Protestantism to be more directly open to the Enlightenment values and principles which were employed to underwrite the republic. As a result, evangelical Protestantism began to lose a significant degree of its substantive difference. This becomes apparent by reviewing the "corollaries of freedom" discussed in the previous chapter. In the nineteenth century, these Enlightenment presuppositions penetrated deep into the substantive make of evangelical Protestantism. The five "corollaries of freedom" may be restated as follows.

(1) Democratic freedom is derived from the absoluteness of individual right and liberty which are God given or natural. The basic task of social polity is that of protecting this divine endowment of liberty. (2) Humans have the capacity to use freedom responsibly because they possess rational and empirical powers. (3) All humans can acquire the virtue required to live the kind of upright moral lives which are necessary in a liberal society. (4) In a framework of personal liberty and the rational empirical sciences, human and social life improve. (5) When a society is organized around individual liberty, harmony and fraternity result - all things work together for good. The way these five presuppositions of freedom penetrated nineteenth century mainstream Protestantism, may be summarized as follows:

1.

The Individual Ethos

(1) As demonstrated in Chapter Two, in America, individual liberty and right were conceived as absolute bequests of nature and organized power was constructed around that premise. Beginning with the Revolution, this "absolute" individualism became a self-conscious component of the American psyche and commenced on a historical career. This was by no stretch of the imagination a simple development of the Puritan commonwealth social model. As discussed in Chapter One, the "free man" in the Puritan setting was in a formal covenant with his fellow citizens in which shared moral values, religious beliefs and social goals were explicit. Economic changes loosened the social fabric of this model, but in its historical beginning and conception, there was no place for the autonomous man or woman. Because

nineteenth century Protestantism was so deeply identified with the social possibilities of the new republic, which was explicitly individualistic in its structural make-up and ethos, whatever remaining sensibilities it had about the importance of ecclesial-social covenantal framework were greatly weakened. The religious life of mainstream Protestants progressively came to reflect and support the individualistic model of society.[86]

As McLoughlin has shown, nineteenth century evangelicalism often saw conversion as initiating and empowering just this kind of individualistic man.

> "For most of these 'unfortunates,' however, those known as 'the deserving poor,' conversion would immediately implant in them the virtues of true Protestantism--industry, sobriety, thrift and piety. And having these, they could not help but rise in the world. 'It is a wonderful fact,' said Dwight L. Moody, the foremost evangelical revivalist of the post-Civil War era, 'that men and women saved by the blood of Jesus rarely remain subjects of charity, but rise at once to comfort and respectability.' The famous novels of the Rev. Horatio Alger, another prominent evangelical spokesman, captured perfectly the fundamental social principles of evangelical self-help and made 'the success myth' seem a reality within the grasp of all Christian men. 'Christianity is your character and character is your capital,' was the essence of this myth and it was believed by everyone from office boys to J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller."[87]

Kessler, summarizing Tocqueville, writes,

> Although the Puritans tolerated material prosperity, their concern for wealth did not significantly diminish their piety. 'If any man among us make religion as twelve and the world as thirteen,' warned a Puritan divine cited by Tocqueville, 'such a one hath not the spirit of a true New-Englandman.' The use of wealth or any worldly good for selfish ends was considered a perverse form of idolatry, 'the grand enemy of *truth* and *peace.*'"
> He [Tocqueville] shows in fact that a trend toward greater moral autonomy accompanied the growth of political freedom and religious individualism as American democracy matured. By the 1830's, private interest had become the 'chief if not the only driving force behind all behavior,' making Tocqueville's Americans more acquisitive, more preoccupied with comfort and convenience, and more self-reliant than traditional Christians were entitled to be. These Americans also came to believe .... that each individual had the right to pursue happiness according to his or her own lights."[88]

In another context, Tocqueville observed,

> "Not only do Americans follow religion from interest, but they place in this world the interest which makes them follow it. In the middle ages, the clergy spoke of nothing but the future state. They hardly cared to prove that

> Christians may be happy here below. But American preachers are constantly referring to the earth... To touch their congregations they always show them how favorable religious opinion is to freedom and public tranquility; and it is often difficult to ascertain from their discourses whether the principal object of religion is to obtain eternal felicity or prosperity in this world."

2.

Reason and Experience

The polemic that Revolutionary America directed against arbitrary and hierarchical political authority impacted on Protestantism, especially the old line churches which were structured on a more clerical dogmatic and hierarchical pattern. Republicanism was forcing these older groups to find new means to secure the people's allegiance. These included the appeal to reasonableness of the truth; appeal to the experiential character of the truth; the use of persuasion and arguing the positive practical good that religion could generate. Hatch has shown that the key to understanding the diverse antebellum religious ferment is the impact of democratic idealism on American Protestantism. The average man and woman were invited to have valid unique religious experiences, subject truth to their own judgement, interpret the Bible for themselves, choose, join, build and lead their own religious communities.[89]

A simple accessible truth available to the common person through an "open" Bible, placed within one's reach the means to ensure equality and individuality. The average person was, on account of this source of truth, given ground to stand on. From this basis, a person could individuate self and underwrite their own equality, no longer seeing self as under and dependent on human authorities and institutions.[90]

Nineteenth century frontier revivalism can be said to have offered a version of the American-democratic self-understanding. It was a kind of vulgarization and "religionization" of the high Enlightenment anthropological idealism, in which one dared to use one's own reason and "read" the book of nature and natural law, thus individuating oneself.

As several scholars have shown, the democratization of America went forward and westward under the impulse of evangelical revivalism.[91] In this phenomenon, religion and individualistic democracy were bound together. The revivalistic

experience, shaped and informed as it was, simultaneously communicated a religious and an American understanding. The unfolding of Protestantism and the unfolding of Americanism occurred together. This unfolding was not the sanitized and orderly worship of the old Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. It was often vulgar, crude, emotional, experiential, polemical, individualistic and revivalistic, it was a people's movement. Through it, individualistic and egalitarian impulses spread.

While mainstream Antebellum Protestantism never dreamed of submitting the traditional references of Christian authority to the radical revision that deism did, it did shift in that direction. Insofar as Protestantism remained connected to classic doctrinal positions, they attempted to access new scientific arguments to prove them. They did so, not because they ceased to respect tradition and scripture, but because they felt compelled to prove the truthfulness of their faith as a republican obligation. They proceeded on the assumption that reason and revelation were ultimately harmonious because truth was singular and absolute. The revealed will of the Creator and the design of creation were in harmony.[92]

Insofar as conversion, piety and change became the chief goal and purpose of religion, matters of truth were made more relative. Practical effects and human transformation required that truth be measured by an anthropological rule. On every account, autonomous and experiential standards of judging Christianity gained ascendancy. Even so, in antebellum Protestantism, truth remained connected to scripture and the Reformation tradition. Experience was tied to the evangelical conceptual language of sin, grace, repentance, faith and piety. The church remained tied to pastoral leadership, but reason, experience and lay autonomy had gained the upper hand. Protestantism had not lost its connection to extrinsic authority, but this connection was dissolving.

3.

Virtue

Within the Enlightenment paradigm of the Founding Fathers, human beings were regarded as possessing the capacity to develop virtue. Virtue was not mysterious. It was neither the property of the elite or the possession of those with exceptional religious devotion. Rather it was contextual. In a social setting which enfranchised citizen rights and encouraged the pursuit of self-interest, the more commendable and

noble traits of self-discipline, moral restraint, firmness of character would emerge. Society would indirectly benefit from virtue. In addition, there existed a limited conception of a citizen's duty to transcend his interest and act for the public good. Human beings possessed the motive and capacity to do this.

Mainstream Protestantism accepted this model of virtue with the exception that they argued for the necessity of an evangelical element. In their mind, conversion played an important role in achieving this morally lean self-empowered individual. And this conversion also freed the fundamental selfish individual to benevolent self-sacrifice. In this way, the Founders' model of virtue was not fundamentally altered or challenged by mainstream Protestants. It was only connected to differing anthropological assumptions. They took the existing republican model of virtue and inserted the missing evangelical element.

4.

Change and Progress

It has already been pointed out how Protestantism became immersed in the eighteenth century Enlightenment idea of change which the Founding Fathers envisioned. Two additional clarifications are discussed in the following which more sharply focus the issue. Generally speaking, the Enlightenment model of change which gained respect in America believed that human and social betterment resulted from organizing society around economic freedom, rational and empirical science and republican virtue. Freedom was the formal requirement for humans to realize their creative potential. The sciences facilitated the mastery over nature by humans and virtue guaranteed that society would leave behind the degradation and corruption that seemed to be such an intransigent characteristic of human history.

Two revisions in Protestant thought removed the barriers that prevented it from becoming assimilated with this Enlightenment view of history. The first of these was the historization of the millennium. This occurred in the seventeenth century when the millennium came to be viewed as a period which preceded the Parousia. *Before* Christ's second coming, a time of peace and righteousness would fill the earth. This of course allowed Christian ideas and secular ideas to be viewed within a common historical framework and this is what occurred in the nineteenth century for reasons discussed in the introduction of this chapter. The second revision that opened

the way for this secular-religious merger was the weakening of Calvinistic theology. William McLoughlin charges American nineteenth century theology as shifting so far from its Calvinistic roots, that it bordered on Pelagianism.[93] As discussed in Chapter One, a social pessimism was intrinsic to Calvinism's view of election and total depravity. Society en masse could never be transformed, but it could be restrained and ordered around the sovereignty of God. And further, through the efforts of the Church, every institution in society could be developed to the glory of God. In short, substantial change but no ideal change could occur.

Nineteenth century Protestantism was less afraid of the world than seventeenth-century Puritanism. It was also more optimistic, and held the implements of universal change in its grasp. Puritanism, while optimistic about transforming the mundane and secular so as to be ordered to the glory of God, remained pessimistic about the world. The wicked world could and must be controlled but could not be fundamentally changed. In the nineteenth century, Protestantism truly became intoxicated with the idea of universal change. The idea of the church as a discrete community of faith in ontological tension with the world, was greatly lessened. In its place, Protestant religion was mainstreamed for its capacity to substantially heal the world and prepare it for the millennium.

The social significance of Arminianism and the Arminian direction of the second Great Awakening is that it theoretically opened the way for the whole of society to be transformed. And this is precisely what revivalism attempted to do. The result was that attention was directed away from the integrity and importance of the church and toward achieving universal social dreams. As emphasized, once the universal social realm was embraced, there was the inevitable absorption of existing universal secular dreams. Even so, antebellum evangelical Protestantism did not fully relinquish the theological basis which guaranteed a difference between a secular and Christian view of history.

5.

Fraternity and Inclusivity

There existed within the Enlightenment the postulate of social unity or fraternity. Instead of a social equation consisting of competing individuals locked in an adversarial connection with each other, not only relative citizen equality was envisioned, but a new fraternity. Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert have

documented the different versions of this unity.[94] Clearly, unity was practically and conceptually a problem endemic to the nation's commitment to liberty, especially religious liberty. Among the several secular, economic and transcendental versions which Heimert and Niebuhr review, they list Protestantism's version.

"In 1798, Baptist Congregationalists, Presbyterians and other brethren of different denominations joined in concert of prayer for spiritual refreshes that would unite the Christians of the nations in the communion of Christ's earthly kingdom. Out of this ecumenical longing came the great revivals of 1800, 1801, and, out of the Awakening in the west, the hope that the Church of Christ, in this highly favored country, should resume that original unity promised in prophecy. *Born of this impulse was the nineteenth century faith that the true American union would come out of the vitalized and harmonized action of the nations myriad evangelical sects* voluntary cooperating in revivalism missionary endeavors and a multitude of "benevolent" enterprise."[95]

Sidney Mead's treatment of the problem of achieving unity in the New Republic struggles with the question at a more seminal level. He suggests that "Protestants (and deists) used the true Catholic answer in defining the nature of man and in confronting the problem of pluralism and religious freedom."[96] Insofar as Protestantism sought to validate the universality of its basic religio-moral beliefs by appealing to rationality and natural law, Mead is correct. Furthermore, Protestantism minimized the importance of doctrine and emphasized the importance of piety, conversion and the practical fruits of Christianity. This turn to the subjective supplied the plasticity that their religion needed in the pluralistic social setting in which it found itself after the Revolution.

While sectarian tensions existed within Protestantism, especially the first half of the nineteenth century, an evangelical ecumenism began to take shape. Rather than challenge the democratic spirit of fraternity, they sought only to introduce the evangelical-protestant element into it. Full membership in the democratic fraternity was limited to those who shared the evangelical experience. In other words, the problem of inclusivity or pluralism in society could not be fully resolved by "secular republicanism." Rather, "evangelical republicanism" was required.

As argued in the introduction of this study, "integration" best describes one side of the character of Protestantism's relation to the fledgling liberal world that was emerging from the Revolution. Integrating its religious properties into the new order for the good of the new order, essentially defines the social logic of post-

establishment Protestantism. This claim is made concrete by reflecting back on the complement Protestantism provided in each of the preceding "corollaries." (1) As shown, Protestantism not only absorbed the Enlightenment value of an anthropocentric individualism, but it sought to complement the individual principle of "self-interest" with a social return "disinterested benevolence." (2) It not only absorbed the empirical and rational shift, but it sought to ensure that scripture and scriptural truth remained valid in this new rational world. (3) It embraced virtue as necessary to a free society, but insisted that piety was the only safe foundation for virtue. As such, piety was given explicit social significance. (4) Rather than dismiss the idea of progress which was thought to accompany a society built on liberal values and rational science, they embraced it and brought to this vision their own millennial ideas. (5) Evangelicals did not discount the ideal of national unity. They merely joined their distinctive contribution to that goal. As Niebuhr and Heimert point out, evangelicals believed "... true *American* union would come out of the vitalized and harmonized action of the nation's myriad evangelical sects."[97]

Conclusion

While evangelical Protestantism was busy *making* the republic Christian i.e. its cultural integrative activity ("the free exercise of religion"), it was nonetheless determined to keep America Christian. Fully able to celebrate and interpret democratic liberty, it was at the same time in tension with this liberty. Perry Miller states, "the student of the period is bound to stand amazed at how far, despite the fervent professions of devotion to the principles of separation, the mind of the country was from accepting the idea of purely secular government, national or state."[98]

For instance, Supreme Court Justice William Story (a supporter of Jasper Adams' sermon) explained in 1833 that the object of the first Amendment is not to countenance infidelity but simply to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects.[99] At the same time, Story could affirm that "the rights of conscience are beyond the reach of any human power and cannot be encroached upon by human authority," then proceeded to qualify his stance by adding, "without a criminal disobedience of the precepts of natural as well as *revealed religion.*"[100] Obviously, Protestantism wanted to hold America to the standard of "revealed religion" considering it to be as universally accessible and authoritative as natural law.

While nineteenth century Protestantism celebrated freedom, it also was adamant that the exercise of this freedom must be limited by its moral sensibilities. When, for instance, Stonewall Jackson proposed mail delivery on Sunday, Protestants vociferously protested.[101] Likewise, blasphemy was regarded as a breach of common law. It was during this period that A. Frelinghuysen, a Protestant evangelical and member of the United States Senate, in his book, *An Inquiry into the Moral Character of the American Government*, argued what evangelicals believed and attempted to ensure: "without religion, law ceases to be law for it has no bond and cannot hold society together."[102] Of course, influence was the chief agency of the Christian religion. But at bottom, nineteenth century evangelicals did not commit themselves wholly to the "weakness" of influence. They insisted that the principles, values and beliefs of Christianity were the common law of the land.[103] Condemning blasphemy, promoting Sabbath observance, preventing licentious books, and the eighteenth amendment, as well as other religio-moral dogmas, all belong to the nineteenth century mind. Most importantly, they contended that America was a Christian nation.

There may exist no clearer and more dramatic example of the irony and tensions in the nineteenth century than the famous Girard case which came before the Supreme Court in February 1844 (Vital et al v. Philadelphia). The trial itself was over the issue of a large trust which, instead of being willed to the normal heirs, the surviving kin, was given for the advancement of education, with the stipulation that such education absent all explicitly religious teachers and teaching of religion. The only institution that qualified was one which was erected under the sole auspices of humanitarian benevolence. The issue that was challenged by these heirs was,

> "whether a trust could legally survive in opposition to the Christian religion. In this case, law and religion came to that parting of ways which both lawyers and Evangelists had long feared which they had striven to postpone, and which for the next three decades they both pretended had not taken place in February of 1844".[104]

Daniel Webster, the premier lawyer of the day (and presidential hopeful), argued the case. Perry Miller described the situation as follows, summarizing the essence of Webster's claim:

> "He (Daniel Webster) brushed aside Girard's notions of rational benevolence, for three days propounded the thesis that Christianity is basic to common law and thus fundamental to the law of Pennsylvania. Since religion is to be

taught only by the clergy, by excluding them, Girard manifestly intended to ridicule them, and so to send his hapless youths into the world with only deism or atheism as their guide, 'equally in defiance of Heaven, and in scorn of the law.' The Common Law has never sanctioned such a scheme, 'and the law of Pennsylvania, of which Christianity is a part, must disown and reject it.' Girard's project could not be considered charity, either in a Christian sense or in the sense of jurisprudence. As Webster worked up to his ultimate paroxysm of eloquence, he wept, the ladies wept, the Judges wept. All the founders of America, he intoned, Puritans, Quakers, Presbyterians brought with them the principle that Christianity inheres in the law of the land:

> 'And where there is any religious sentiment amongst men at all, this sentiment incorporates itself with the law. *Every thing declares it.* The massive cathedral of the Catholic; the Episcopalian church, with its lofty spire pointing heavenward; the plain temple of the Quaker; the log church of the hardy pioneer of the wilderness; the mementos and memorial around and about us; the consecrated graveyards, their tombstones and epitaphs, their silent vaults, their mouldering contents; all attest it. *The dead prove it as well as the living.* The generations that are gone before speak to it, and pronounce it from the tomb. We feel it. All, all proclaime that Christianity, general, tolerant Christianity, Christianity independent of sects and parties, that Christianity to which the sword and the fagot are unknown, general, tolerant Christianity, is the law of the land.'" [105]

In the end, Webster and the living kin of Girard lost. Miller points out the irony in the ruling that was handed down. The presiding justice William Story, an advocate of Christianity as the common law of the land, ruled on the legality of Girard's will, claiming that because it was aimed at "benevolence" as the will explicitly stated, and that since "benevolence" was essentially Christian, it must stand.

Protestant evangelicalism had elevated benevolence as that which was unitive and the substantive essence of true Christianity and the practical expression of it. But although Protestants in the antebellum period advocated benevolence, they were not ready to fully define Christianity and its relationship to society in that way. Story and the Supreme Court's ruling was the prolepsis of an approaching age, a prophetic debut of Protestantism's predicament of being too closely identified with the new world that was emerging.

The Jeffersonian-Lockean principles of government were only beginning to be consistently implemented by politicians and justices toward the end of the antebellum period. No clear unambiguous course marks this time. Churchmen, however, were less ambiguous. Starting as they did from theological premises, they interpreted the new liberty in the context of their bias about the necessity of religion and God to the moral and social order and stability of the state. But the Jeffersonian principle had

inseminated the nation. Jefferson and others had exalted a new principle and given it political form at the heart of the new nation. Through the efforts and "conversion" of many in time, it would achieve a predominance in the country.

As will be discussed in the following chapter, some have recently argued that the country's Founding Fathers and the subsequent national beginning intended that Christianity, its beliefs and values, be the determinant moral boundaries of society - a position from which they lament America has now fallen. Rather than supporting this claim, their amassing of "historical" precedent and evidence (although selective), demonstrates that the beginning was not a neat and clean unfolding of the new social ordering. In that early period, the old and the new intermingled and compromised each other. Gradually, the secular sourcing of America can be seen to progressively emerge towards dominance.[106] Even so, this review testifies to the entrenchment of premises that find their origin in the basic presuppositions from which the Puritans so eloquently argued. These take on a new militancy in the twentieth century, fueled not only by a past inertia but by a present more consistently organized under the individual principle, a principle which was disclaimed by Bushnell for the havoc which it created to social order and stability.[107]

In the final analysis, antebellum Protestantism's problem of insufficient differentiation from the emerging modern world (manifested in the dynamics of fixity and freedom) must be viewed in contrast to the period that had past. Society had changed in two ways. First, it was formally, i.e. politically, being emancipated from Protestant religion. Second, the reorganization of society that had come with the Revolution was infused with meaning. Society itself, conceived as a *human* contract, claimed to embody ideals and a new kind of human future.

It appears that instead of being the death knell of religion in the form of social fixity, disestablishment and the formation of a republic served to unite the once divided Protestants in an effort to control the religio-moral boundaries of the new nation. This was in part motivated from a collective Protestant anxiety about the prospect of society's autonomy. Protestantism's "foster child" was officially leaving "home." Because of the depth of Calvinistic premises which made it impossible to view society autonomously, and because of the historical inertia which propelled the idea of Christian colonies forward toward a "Christian republic," only a revision of the relation of religion to society occurred in the antebellum period.[108]

Much of nineteenth century Protestantism was unable to conceive of society as an independent entity. To view the new socio-national creation as a human invention abstracted from an explicit connection to the one sovereign God and his revealed will was to invite disorder and chaos. The result, was that Protestantism revised its script of how and why its religion should have ongoing authority in the public square. Protestantism abstracted and *universalized* a bottom line quotient of the Christian religion. Only that which was essential to maintain society's Christian identity in a broad sense would remain in force socially. Influence was the only proper means whereby Christianity was to enjoy its predominance over society. Protestants wanted to be part of the new age and place the Christian religion on the high ground of influence alone. At the same time, they wanted to ensure, even bias, the situation so that society would be under that influence. They wanted to *"Christianize"* America, that is to say, they identified and qualified the new republic as "Christian." Whereas in early times "Christian" had an ecclesiological content, it was now applied to a nation.

Finally, it may be said that they *moralized* Christianity for social ends and goals. They argued that the liberal character of their new government predicated the Christian religion. Individual liberty and Christian religion were axiomatic. In order for society to maintain its moral fabric, it must be correlated to that which provided authoritative moral guidance and force, i.e. the Bible as revealed truth and a transcendent God of rewards and punishments.

Just as the renewed passion for "fixity" arose out of the tensions and anxieties that came in the wake of society's shift toward autonomy, "freedom" arose out of the attraction inherent in that autonomy (i.e. temptations and pressures). At the time that society was gaining autonomy, the creative power of religion (i.e. regeneration, "new birth" human change) was being, in part, abstracted from the ecclesial setting within which it had existed. This was due both to the influence of evangelicalism (elevating the importance and imperative of personal experience) and the Enlightenment (elevating the sanctity of conscience necessitated by the dogma of individual liberty and dignity).[109]

The result of this abstraction or individualization of religion was that it was freed to coalesce around the greater new entity of society, an organized and idealized modern republic. The "Arminiazation" of much of American Protestantism

functioned to weaken it, making it more vulnerable to become organized around the interests and values of the emerging nation-state. The arguments for a Christian America, and the axiomatic relation between liberty and the Christian religion, also served to foster this enmeshment in republican idealism. In these two phenomena (fixity and freedom), an eventuality occurred in which Protestantism was on the one side attempting to limit society's differentiation from itself. On the other side, Protestantism was losing its critical differentiation and moving under the attraction and powerful ethos of this new entity. In both of these, sociological movement and theological selection and change were at work.

Endnotes

1. "In Franklin's words, those notions were 'the existence of the Deity; that he made the world, and govern'd it by his Providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing of good to men; that our souls are immortal; and that all crime will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter.' A century later, in 1885, these notions were so much a part of the American ethos, that Josiah Strong, a Congregational pastor and leader, probably thought he was merely repeating a truism when he said that 'The teaching of the three great fundamental doctrines which are common to all monotheistic religions is essential to the perpetuity of free institutions, while the inculcation of sectarian dogmas is not. These three doctrines are that of the *existence of God, the immortality of man, and man's accountability.*'" American Civil Religion, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, "The Nation With A Soul of a Church" by Sidney Mead, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) p. 57.

2. *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn A. Smith, "The Voluntary Establishment of Religion" by E. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), p. 158.

3. "... there was general agreement that American republicanism enjoyed biblical sanction and that, as Theodore Freilinghuysen argued, 'Republic is a word of Christian meaning.' Benjamin F. Tefft discerned the 'republican tendency in Christianity' in the 'absolute justice and the most consummate equality of [God's] moral government' and in 'the main principle of practical Christianity,' the instruction 'to love our neighbours as ourselves[,]... the first maxim of all free institutions.' Then, too, there was the emphasis on individual judgement and personal responsibility in both Protestant faith and republican practice. A French commentator, Michel Chevalier, saw clearly this evangelical sense of 'harmony between... political and religious schemes' in America: 'Protestantism is republican; puritanism is absolute self-government in religion and begets it in politics.'

"American republicanism appeared not just scriptural but God-given. It was part of the Lord's 'grand and glorious destiny' for the country, a step towards 'the introduction of [the] Political and Civil Millennium,' evidence that Americans were 'repositories of an important trust.'" Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*, (Yale University Press, 1993) p. 19.

4. "Evangelical Protestant churches on the defensive against deism and natural religion through the Revolutionary Era, recovered their confidence during what is known as the Second Great Awakening, and established themselves as the primary religious force in the

country...

"During the urgent later stages of the Second Great Awakening in the 1830's and 1840's, hundreds of thousands of new converts became full members of the Protestant Churches. By mid-century, evangelical Protestantism was the principle subculture in American society." Ibid., p. 1.

"By the mid-nineteenth century American religious life was dominated by an expansive, revival focused evangelicalism which enjoyed considerable congruence of belief..." Ibid., p. 2.

"American evangelical Protestantism was certainly more homogenous than the multiplicity of denominations suggested but for many church members their attachment to denomination meant more to them than being part of a wider evangelical community." Ibid., p. 4.

5. Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, *A Nation So Conceived*, (New York: Scribners, 1963), p. 20.

6. "Republicanism was a beautiful but tender plant, a form of government 'which has never yet succeeded since the world stood' and which would perish without the protection of public virtue and religion. As Banjamin Tefft put it, "A republic is the body, Christianity is the soul." Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics*, p. 20.

7. See Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* quoted in Chapter One.

8. Compare J.F. Maclear's "The Republic and the Millenium" in *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991) p. 188, with Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Irony of American History*, where he discusses the puritan view that providence and piety are connected. pp. 51-54 and pp. 70-71.

9. See J.F. Maclear's "The Republic and the Millenium," p. 183 ff.

10. I am referring here to the millerite movement which predicted the sudden end of the world on October 22, 1844.

11."Society is a dialectic phenomenon in that it is a human product... that yet continuously acts back upon its producer... The statement, that society is the product of man and that man is the product of society, are not contradictory. They rather reflect the inherently dialectic character of the societal phenomenon." Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967) 3-4.

12. This point was in part recognized by Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert in their book, *A Nation So Conceived*. "Protestantism on the frontier not only increased the religious diversity of the growing nation, it also transmuted the pietistic sect into a socially radical faith which espoused the political cause, first of Jefferson, and then of Jackson. In the process the original perfectionism and rigorism of sectarian Protestantism became a rather complacent equalitarianism and libertarianism which solemnly affirmed the new world would create or had already created the perfect equality and liberty which the effete and moribund nations of Europe sought in vain. Thus there grew on American soil a religious and evangelical version of the spirit of the secular Enlightenment in France--a form of utopianism which regarded 'liberty, equality, fraternity' as simple historical possibilities." *A Nation So Conceived*, p. 49.

13. The "standing order" spoken of here is the persistence of the New England Puritan policy which required every household in a given town to financially support the official house of worship or houses of worship.

14. As is well known among students of the Revolutionary period, Baptists, i.e. pietists and Enlightenment rationalists came to common ends from different starting points in their thinking. The Rationalists and the Pietists joined hands and called for separation of Church and State, but within the Baptist pietists, that is to say even within the so-called emerging "left-wing Evangelicals," there was the faint line of an eventual cleavage for and against the ongoing official role of religion in the public sphere. See William G. McLoughlin, "The Role of Religion in the Revolution," in *Essays on the American Revolution*, ed. Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, (University of North Carolina Press; W.W. Norton, 1973) 207 ff. Isaac Backus worked out his position on church-state relations from New Light Edwardian Calvinistic premises while the other preeminent out-spoken Baptist of the period, John Leland, took up his position on Church-State separation on historic Baptist premises, in a more synthetic, less critical relation to popular rationalism. See Stanley Grenz, "Sweet Harmony: Isaac Backus and His Vision of Church-State Relationships," *Report from the Capital* (Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, March, 1985). "The *Writings of Elder John Leland*, ed. L.F. Greene (New York, 1845) 561-570. Though Backus' views on Church and State are often equated with those of Leland, it is clear that the two had distinctly different positions on many aspects of this question. Leland, perhaps by virtue of his long residence in Virginia, held views much closer to those of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison than to the pietists of New England. While he lived in Massachusetts during the latter part of his life and continued the fight for disestablishment after Backus' death, he was always viewed as extremely eccentric by the Baptist leaders both in his theological and social attitudes. The key to their difference can be seen in the fact that while most of Backus' friends who lived into the age of Jackson became theocratic Whigs, Leland was an ardent anticlerical Jacksonian democrat." William G. McLoughlin, Intro. to *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism: Pamphlets 1754-1789*, ed. William G. McLoughlin, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap, 1968), 51.

15. Ibid., 49-52.

16. "Backus expressed no opposition to Sabbath laws, teaching Calvinistic doctrine in the public schools, proscribing blasphemy and conducting official days of fasting and prayer." Arlin M. Adams and Charles J. Emmerich, *A Nation Dedicated to Religious Liberty: The Constitutional Heritage of the Religion Clauses*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) 15. McLoughlin's research suggests similar conclusions. See McLoughlin, Intro. to *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism*, 50-52.

17. See Sidney Mead, *The Old Religion in the Brave New World*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 93.

18. A, Premier scholar on Isaac Backus, William G. McLoughlin, summarizes Backus' Church-State position as follows, "He wrote and worked to exalt the religious liberty of the individual above the Church and the State, yet he always asserted the necessity for a Christian state subservient to the ultimate moral authority of God's law... The instability of his polarity between the desire for a corporate Christian state and the insistence upon an individualistic, voluntaristic polity in Church and State remains the basic problem of the American pietistic experiment in freedom. McLoughlin, Intro. to *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism*, 61.

19. Stanley Grenz, "Sweet Harmony," 5.

20. McLoughlin, Intro. to *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism*, 51.

21. Ibid., 54 ff.

22. Daniel L. Dreisbach recently resurrected this sermon and published it complete with the letters of response which Adams received, along with a review of it. In addition, Dreisbach included with the sermon a valuable introduction and historical commentary. Daniel L. Dreisbach, ed., *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic: Jasper Adams and the Church-State Debate*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

23. Dreisbach, preface to *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic*, xii, xiii.

24. "Adam's sermon and the review essay illustrate two sharply contrasting interpretations of the constitutional role of religion in American public life." Dreisbach, preface to *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic*, xiii.

25. President Andrew Jackson was viewed by many Protestants as moving the nation toward a secularist culture. Chief among Protestants' complaints was Jackson's insistence that the U.S. Mail be delivered on Sunday.

26. As already pointed out in the preceding footnotes in this chapter, Baptists, while markedly more Jeffersonian in their bias, were not uniformly behind the full implications of the Jefferson/Madison position.

27. Dreisbach, Intro. to *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic*, 15.

28. Ibid., 17,18

29.Ibid., 14-18.

30. Ibid., 17, 20.

31. Ibid., 17.

32. Ibid., 18.

33. Ibid., 7, 12, 14-17

34. Robert Baird, *Religion in American,* critical abridgment by Henry Warner Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1970) 110.

35. Ibid., 100.

36. Ibid., 110.

37. Ibid., 100.

38. Ibid., 111.

39. Ibid., 111.

40. Ibid., 111

41. Ibid., 111, 112.

42. Ibid., 112-114

43. Ibid., 113.

44. Ibid., 113.

45. Ibid., 115.

46. Ibid., 116

47. It was in the Baptist Joint Committee's Archives that I first became aware of Backus' position as cited here. Baird's work was already in my possession. It was Sidney Mead's chapter, "Christian Orthodoxies Versus the Premises of Republic" in *The Old Religion in a Brave New World* that brought to my cognizance Bushnell's thinking on the subject under discussion. Adams' work was introduced to me through the Library of Congress.

48. "Reverses Needed," July 1861. In *The Spirit in Man: Sermons and Selections* (New York: Scribner's, 1910), 159-84. "Popular Government by Divine Right," November, 1864, in Building Eras in Religion, (New York: Scribner's, 1910), 186-318. "The Idea That Caused a War: Horace Bushnell Versus Thomas Jefferson," *The Journal of Church and State*, XVI, 1 (1974), 73-83.

49. Mead, *Old Religion,* 102, 103.

50. Ibid., 101

51. Ibid., 102.

52. Ibid., 103.

53. Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Volume I, 1799-1870*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 263.

54. See Ibid., 262; and H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, (New York: Scribners, 1963), 270-275.

55. Welch, *Protestant Thought*, 263.

56. This conclusion is drawn from a number of strands of Bushnell's thought. The "new" emphasis on sin being transmitted through social structures in time gave birth to the logical emphasis on the transformation of those environs which accounted for humans' social formation. Walter Raushenbusch's *A Theology of the Social Gospel* represents the end product in the second and third decades of the twentieth century of the precise logic Bushnell spearheaded in America in 1850. As shall be discussed later, this entire movement suffered from a logical silence on the doctrine of the church, immersed as they were in a doctrine of immanence and the social origins and resolution of the human plight.

57. Mead, *Old Religion*, 102.

58. Morton Borden, "Christ and the Constitution," church and State, (September, 1987): 10-13. Edwin S. Gaustad, "Religious Tests, Constitutions, and 'Christian Nation'," in *Religion in a Revolutionary Age*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, (Charlottesville: US Capitol Historical Society-University Press of Virginia, 1994). Edwin S. Gaustad, "From Notary Public to President," unpublished manuscript, (Washington DC: Baptist Joint Committee). Walter Berns, "The Writing of the Constitution of the United States," reprint from *The Making of Constitutions* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute). Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, The Godless Constitution, (New York & London: Norton, 1996). Robert Boston, *Why the Religious Right Is Wrong*, (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1993).

59. The Protestant attempt to establish religion in America in the nineteenth century is most fully evidenced by the National Reform Association, "a coalition formed in 1863 by

representatives from eleven Protestant denominations. One of the group's stated goals was "to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will declare the nation's allegiance to Jesus Christ and its acceptance of the moral laws of the Christian religion, and so indicate that this is a Christian nation." Boston, *Why the Religious Right Is Wrong*, 86.

60. Cf. Baird, *Religion in America*, xxxiii, 113.

61. "The *de facto* Protestant establishment was made possible because most Americans were Protestant and because the federal courts rarely involved themselves in Church-State matters. Therefore, there was little to stop lawmakers from passing and enforcing laws that had religious veneers. At this time, the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights was not seen as binding on the states. Although the Fourteenth Amendment was passed following the Civil War, it was not interpreted as applying the Bill of Rights to the states until 1940. Boston, *Why the Religious Right Is Wrong*, 82.

62. Mead, *Old Religion*, 92-93.

63. See Andrew C. McLoughlin, *Foundations of American Constitutionalism* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1961), 18-37.

64. Martin E. Marty, *The Infidel: Freethought and American Religion* (Cleveland: Meridian-World Publishing, 1969). See chapter entitled "The Intrusion of 'Infidelity of the Tom Paine School' (1784-1809)", 19-32. Mays' Book and its premise see Marsden'.

65. William G. McLoughlin, *Isaac Backus*, 52, 53.

66. Martin E. Marty, *The Infidel: Freethought and American Religion*, (Cleveland: Meridian-World Publishing, 1969). See chapter entitled "The Intrusion of 'Infidelity of the Tom Paine School' (1784-1809)", 19

67. Ibid., 27.

68. See Marty, *The Infidel*, 26-32. Edwin S. Gaustad, "Disciples of Reason," *Christian History*, Issue 50, (XV, no. 2):28-31. Adrienne Koch, *Power, Morals, and the Founding Fathers: Essays in the Interpretation of the American Enlightenment* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, Cornell Paperbacks, 1961). Norman Cousins, *The Republic of Reason: The Personal Philosophies of the Founding Fathers* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Perennial Library, 1988). Edwin S. Gaustad, Faith of Our Fathers: *Religion and the New Nation*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

69. "...deists and deism had entered the Protestant churches through the door of natural religion. And in its pure form, deism moved past Protestant Christianity to take a non-church form... important deists posited belief in an afterlife of future reward or punishment. The deists creed emphasized a good and moral life, and it looked to nature and its law as source of revelation and guidance. Significantly, deism found organizational expression in the fraternal societies of freemasonry, an institution and system of belief and practice that we will explore in more detail... Here the brotherhood supported an ethic of right relationship in one's doings and dealings with one's fellows.

"Deism was carried through the colonies within the freemasonic lodges. Indeed as brother masons deists played a key role in the political process that brought the new nation into being. The revolutionary organization of the Sons of Liberty and the revolutionary committees of correspondence were tied closely to freemasonry. Probably fifty-two of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were Masons, as were the majority of the

members of the Continental Congress. Moreover, nearly every American General in the revolutionary war was a mason. Enshrined in the freemasonic lodges, deism existed cordially beside Protestant Christianity and by so doing moved Protestant Masonic brothers in a liberal direction... Masonic symbols were often biblical, but could also be understood in terms of deist natural religion, and deists' rituals could likewise be so understood." Catherine L. Albanese, *American Religions and Religion*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1992).

70. William G. McLoughlin, Isaac Backus, 52.

71. William G. McLoughlin, writing about the founding statesmen such as Madison, Jefferson and George Mason in contrast to late eighteenth century pietists, discloses the "religious" element in their position. "While both viewpoints are individualistic, the pietist was concerned with the spiritual welfare of the individual soul in relation to God and eternity while the deist (or latitudinarian) was concerned with the social and political welfare of the individual personality (defined in terms of "reason and conviction") in relation to his fellow men on earth. The pietist wanted religious freedom so that men may follow the Truth of Revelation, the deist wanted it so men might seek the Truth wherever reason may lead; the pietist was concerned with God, the object of worship; the deist with God the Creator of the universe." McLoughlin, *Isaac Backus*, 47-48.

72. The following statements by two American historians, Catherine Albanese and Martin Marty, are characteristic of students analyzing this period. "In sum deism, although in its most integral version not Christian at all, managed in the new world to make its way into Protestant thought and life... Blending with currents of Arminianism and rationalism, deism furthered the spirit of tolerance." Albanese, 122. "The Enlightenment prevailed over the form American religion took in its development from Calvinism." Martin E. Marty, *The New Shape of American Religion* (New York: Harper, 1958-1959), 71-72.

73. See De Touqueville, *Democracy in America* Vol II, 127, quoted in James Wood, "Religion, Fundamentalism and the New Right," *Journal of Church and State* 22 (1980) : 410.

74. Robert T. Handy. *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historic Realities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 110.

75. "With the birth of the nation, the evangelical and millenarianism merged with the Jeffersonian sense of mission. By 1800, our Fathers saw this democratic nation as a bright and shining example for the oppressed inhabitants of the world." Niebuhr and Heimert, A Nation So Conceived.

76. "Calvinism proved unable to maintain its hold over an America growing rich, strong, free, egalitarian, and self-confident. Calvinism required a submissiveness to Providence, authority, tradition, and mystery which the rationalism and "common sense" of the "enlightened" Americans found unnatural and even unchristian. Thomas Paine, Ethan Allen, and Elihu Palmer found it all too easy to prove that Calvin's God was cruel, tyrannical and inconsistent--characteristics which seemed unworthy of the God who had blessed America with such good fortune. But few Americans were willing to replace Christianity with the abstract laws of nature and the religion of reason. Instead they found new light in the Bible which did away with Calvin's arbitrary God of wrath. During the Second Great Awakening they concluded that God was really a God of love, benevolence, and free grace who was as eager to produce revivals and to distribute salvation as men were to receive and rejoice in them. God, the arbitrary tyrant, was succeeded on the throne by Jesus, the loving friend.

After 1830, man and God worked together as partners to save the world from sin." William G. McLoughlin, *Isaac Backus*, 52-53. Perry Miller, "The Intellect of the Revival," chap. in *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War*, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1965), 3.

77. Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 33.

78. Ibid., 32.

79. See for instance Perry Miller, *Life of the Mind* p 78-84.

80. Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism & the American Dream* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 166.

81. De Tocqueville observed in his trip to America that "religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions." See Tocqueville. See James Wood, "Religion, Fundamentalism and the New Right," *Journal of Church and State* 22 (1980) : 410.

82. Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 79.

83. See comments on the Battle Hymn of the Republic, a testament to Protestantism's fusion of religion with national goals in the nineteenth century. William G. McLoughlin, ed., *The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology* (Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1968), 28-29.

84. Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Christian Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 113.

85. "Because the mass of temperance literature was, of course, devoted to the deleterious effects of alcohol upon physiology, we are apt to dismiss it as cranky. We thus lose sight of the central motive in the movement, which was, as Grimke explicitly declared, to discover a cause that was simultaneously Christian and American. In it 'the principle of *individual responsibility* and *social influence* has ever been manifested.' It makes every allowance for American individualism, but also holds persons responsible to the common stock. 'The Temperance Reformation is peculiarly Christian, AMERICAN.'" Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 86.

86. McLoughlin, *The American Evangelicals*, p. 102.

87. McLoughlin, *The American Evangelicals*, 13.

88. Kessler, *Tocqueville's Civil Religion,* p. 131.

89. See Nathan O. Hatch, "Introduction," *The Democratization of American Christianity*, (Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 3-16.

90. Catherine L. *Albanese, American Religions and Religion*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1992).

91. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, A Nation So Conceived, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,1963), 44ff.

92. Both the deistic moral reference and its evangelical variant were derived from universal inexorable laws of creation and/or an absolute infallible Bible, both of which practically orientated humanness toward a fixed absolute source outside of oneself.

First in Europe, later in America, this came to be regarded as one of the

Enlightenment's flaws. By linking reason to a fixed design, it compromised its openness to particularity and its promise to birth a new humanism. In appropriating the Enlightenment, America appropriated and structured this "flaw." Nineteenth century America fostered a view of freedom modeled after the eighteenth century Enlightenment republican conception. Protestantism's use of the Bible, less theological and exegetical, more proof-text and authoritarian, was less able to be a prophetic, critical resource and was more exploitable by a static ethos.

93. See McLoughlin, *The American Evangelicals*, 26.

94. Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, *A Nation So Conceived* (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1963), pp. 15-30.

95. Ibid., p. 20.

96. Sidney Mead, *The Old Religion In Brave New World* (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1977), p. 8.

97. *A Nation So Conceived*, p. 20.

98. Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 67.

99. Ibid., 37.

100. Ibid., 37.

101. Dreisbach, Intro., *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic,* 4-8.

102. Miller, *Life of the Mind,* 39.

103. In Chapter 4, "Law and Morality," in *The Life of the Mind in America*, Miller discloses the extent to which some leading Protestant public figures went to argue Christianity was the foundation of civil law. See 186-202.

104. Miller, *Life of the Mind,* 198.

105. Ibid., 200.

106. "The *de facto* Protestant establishment was a throwback but it did not last. Eventually an attitude reflecting the proper relationship between church and State, which was pioneered in the post-Revolutionary War period and lay neglected for nearly one hundred years, re-emerged. Following the Civil War, courts became increasingly reluctant to look for religious justifications to uphold laws. Steven K. Green, an attorney for Americans United for Separation of Church and State who has researched the Christian nation concept extensively, reports that after 1860 courts began turning to secular justifications to uphold blasphemy statutes or school Bible-reading laws. In other cases, judges rejected the laws outright." Boston, 90. "Thus, the limits of religious freedom in the nineteenth century were defined not by the national government, but in the states. While the tale is one of increasingly liberty, the pace was ragged, with declarations on the subject often contradictory. Nearly every state adopted in its constitution some clause proclaiming religious freedom, but upon closer examination this liberty was far from absolute." Melvin I. Urofsky and Philip E. Urofsky, "Two Hundred Years of Mr. Jefferson's Idea: A 'Wall' of Separation: The Expansion of Religious Freedom in the United States," (Richmond: Virginia Department of Education).

107. In the nineteenth century society, cultural and religious interests merged. George Marsden correctly summarizes that Protestantism consolidated its cultural hegemony in the first half of the nineteenth century (4). The eventuality that occurred from this was that "Protestant church related institutions typically regarded themselves as essentially public institutions." "As well...they made almost no distinction between the ideals that should shape the whole of American society and the particulars of the Protestant faith"(6). Foremost among these institutions was that of the nation's educational systems. For all practical purposes, the mainstream of the American educational system would become thoroughly enmeshed with Protestantism. During the nineteenth century, Protestantism standards and beliefs and, in the case of colleges, the actual administration were explicitly evangelical Protestant, filling both sectarian and socio-cultural needs. But this was not simply a growing pluralistic America under the cultural hegemony of Protestantism.

Protestantism was increasingly permeated with republican values and it mediated these to society. Marsden lists four examples of this. First, they accepted and promoted scientific standards, a critical standard for modern knowledge. Especially was this true of the post Puritan New England Protestants who held the undisputed lead in educational pursuits. Second, Protestantism became the grid through which the nation received the republican moral ideals that grew out of the Revolution. Third, Protestantism elevated the romantic principle of individual development. And fourth, it adopted the German idea of the university for America. In time, Protestantism's involvement with its world would lead to a "Protestant universalism" in which its "Christian values" came to be increasingly abstracted and universalized for pluralistic culture. In this its institutions would become more secular and its faith more identified with a social-moral idealism and social transformation. George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestantism to Established Nonbelief.* (Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1994).

108. "James McClellan, a biographer of Justice Story, observed that Adams's sermon 'deals with this very issue of the absolutist [i.e., strict separationist] versus the no preference theories at both the state and federal levels.' A nonpreferentialist, McClellan described Adams as 'an informed critic of the wall of separation theory' whose sermon 'offers an abundance of evidence to refute the notion that Church-State relations in early nineteenth century America ever followed the absolutist example offered by Jefferson and Madison.' Story's letter further buttresses the nonpreferentialist position. Separationist advocates, in sharp contrast, have found succor in Madison's strong dissent to Adams's thesis. For example, reflecting on Madison's letter, Adrienne Koch concluded that Madison "tried to establish a *secular* moral order as the American political system, and thought it might be good, perhaps even the best order ever devised.' These contrasting views persist to modern times." Dreisbach, Intro. to *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic*, 22. See also 48-49.

109. In the mid-nineteenth century, Baird could say, "Nineteen twentieths of all evangelical churches in this country believe that there is such a thing as being born again." *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America*, p. 2. This history no doubt was the seed bed for William James' pivotal book 50 years later, *The Verities of Religious Experience*. By this time, "New Birth" was easily wrested from its parochial evangelical language and could be viewed and discussed as a universal spiritual phenomenon.

CHAPTER FOUR

Two Manifestations of Fixity and Freedom in the Twentieth Century

In this chapter, I analyze several distinct twentieth century developments of "fixity" and "freedom." The entire scope of the century is not under study. The goal is only to selectively demonstrate the ongoing development of this two-sided phenomenon in this century.

The groups which are reviewed are Protestant liberalism, the social gospel movement at the beginning of this century, and the fundamentalist driven Religious Right that has emerged in the last decades of this century. Starting from what has been said about Protestantism's uncritical identification with its world, Section A attempts to show how Protestantism, in the form of liberalism and the social gospel movement, became more deeply integrated into the emerging modern world. In Section B, a contemporary manifestation of the problem of fixity is discussed. Between 1901 and 1930, the liberal movement in mainstream Protestantism so thoroughly assimilated the Enlightenment premises that had been woven into the American beginning, that its fundamental differentiation was in question. As discussed in Chapter Three, the origin of this assimilation derives from the fact that in the wake of the Revolution and disestablishment, mainstream Protestantism refused Jefferson's and Williams' separation of church and state for a new kind of union. It identified the Republic with its goals and it identified itself with the Republic's goals. As discussed, while in the antebellum period, this identity was not consistent, nevertheless, significant assimilation occurred. Substantive distinctions existed but these were eroding - Protestantism was undergoing revision. In liberalism, Protestantism completes this journey. While much has been written on the phenomenon of American liberalism, the emphasis has been on the corrosive effect of eclectic influences such as Darwinism, biblical criticism, neo-Platonism, scientific and technological advancement. The thrust of this thesis is to point to a more fundamental problem: Protestantism's historic identification with America as a new kind of modern society. The real problem with liberalism did not originate from its radical theological revisions. These were symptoms of a deeper confusion about the nature of Christianity's relation to the developing modern world.

In 1979, the fundamentalist driven Religious Right came into existence,

exhibiting Protestantism's historic propensity to control its world. Not able to suffer the widening difference between its own traditional "Judeo-Christian" values and modernity come of age, the Religious Right reached for implements which would minimally realign the sociocultural world to their familiar religio-moral "absolutes." As will be discussed, the roots of the Religious Right go back to that constituency of Protestantism which resisted liberalism's assimilation of modernity - fundamentalism. Because fundamentalism never addressed the deeper problem behind liberalism - the relationship of Protestantism to America, in time, like liberalism, it too was destined to betray this identity. This was manifested in its efforts to control the religious and moral parameters of its world. Both the Religious Right and liberalism refused to suffer the estrangement of a world which had become different. The difference between the responses of "fixity" and "freedom" at the end of the day is the difference between attempting to force an approximate external unity or attempting to achieve a substantive unity through theological revision.

What makes each of these movements a serious manifestation of the problem of "fixity" and "freedom" is not that Protestantism's propensity toward either of these dynamics necessarily intensified with time, but the changes that occurred in the world and correspondingly within Protestantism itself. The nineteenth century antebellum world, while inseminated with the seeds of modernity, remained in part "nascent modernity." It was a world in a Protestant cultural grip whose own socio-cultural principle had not been fully realized. When the nineteenth century world began to find its own secular feet, and modernity came into its own, the price for remaining closely identified with the "new" world increased. If Protestantism was to continue to be a participant in the socio-cultural project of modernity, more thorough adjustments and revisions would be required. It is in the context of these adjustments and revisions that Protestantism's historic problem of weak differentiation became serious. That is to say, it was in danger of completely losing its essential difference.

Section A

"Fixity" and "Freedom" at the Turn of the Century

In the twentieth century, Protestantism would become even more identified with the sociocultural project that came into existence with the modern state than it was in the nineteenth century. This claim is supported through three overlapping

discussions.

First, the preexisting problem is reviewed. The premises that had come to dominate Protestantism in the nineteenth century were the bridge for a more serious involvement.

Second, the social gospel movement further narrowed the difference between the church's goals and that of the world. It was a case of building on nineteenth century Protestantism's precedents while keeping in step with the changes that came to be recognized as necessary to bring modernity's project to its proper maturity.

In the reforms the social gospel movement sought to effect, there are to be seen characteristics of both "fixity" and "freedom." As will be discussed, the social "gospelers" were both optimistic and pessimistic. They were optimistic insofar as they believed in the democratic realization of the Founders' liberal values. They were pessimistic insofar as they had come to believe that these liberal values would not automatically embody the republic. Measured by the standards set up for this study, the social gospel movement saw Christianity's social relevance in a regulative and integrative light. They believed both in modern freedom within a democratic framework and saw Christianity as essentially in harmony with and supportive of that value and they recognized that the democratic extension of rights and liberties required accessing political power. With this awareness, Christianity came to be understood as overtly political. A new vision of political power to check the abuse of liberty and extend the republican dream came into existence. It is important to emphasize however, that the social gospel movement did not engage in its new socio-political mission from a safe distance, i.e., a clearly differentiated identity. In their minds, the line of distinction between modern America and Christianity was faint, if not absent.

In the third sub-section, liberalism's shift from evangelical empiricism to a consistent doctrine of immanence is reviewed. Nowhere is the deepening of Protestantism's captivity to the idealism of modernity more apparent than in this revision.

Protestantism's Identification With Nascent Modernity: A Review of the Nineteenth Century Problem

As demonstrated, the roots of Protestantism's close identification with

America are facilitated by nineteenth century revivalism and its piety. Both Protestantism, liberalism and the social gospel movement would build on this beginning and deepen Protestantism's identity with its world.[1]

Nineteenth century Protestantism became permeated with Arminian, or as one historian refers to them, "Methodist" premises.[2] It was in this new form, that Protestantism proceeded to dominate American culture,[3] and it is this phenomenon that primarily accounts for Protestantism's involvement in the cultural shift to modernist premises.

If nineteenth century Protestantism had had sufficient differentiation from culture, it is unlikely that it would have become so deeply mired in the cultural secularism that erupted in America toward the end of the nineteenth century and the first thirty years of this century.[4] The analysis of the distinguished Baptist historian Winthrop Hudson, is especially helpful in explaining this. The cultural success and dominance of Protestantism in the last half of the nineteenth century provided the bridge for it to become uncritically involved and invested in modernistic premises and goals.

Arminianism was the mainspring of nineteenth century evangelical revivalism. It allowed and encouraged Protestant religion to become optimistically involved in the project of human change. It proceeded on the assumption that all human beings possessed the capacity to be transformed and that God's spirit, via evangelical dynamism, stood ready to be released at will toward that end. Once the conclusion was reached that one person could change, it was one short step to the next conclusion: an entire society could be changed. The implement to accomplish this had at long last come into view: revivalism. Contained in this solution was a reductionism.

Christianity was being pressed toward one primary shape, namely, that of its instrumental capacity to effect change. To create new human beings, a new society of such human beings, all alive with individual piety and virtue, became the new goal. These individuals would in turn permeate and transform the institutions of society. This was not merely a dream but was substantially realized in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth.

Protestantism took on the shape of busyness and became an agent for individual and social betterment. Revivalism led to moral idealism. A conquest of

culture by Protestantism had occurred so that, as Winthrop Hudson writes, by the turn of the century it had "brought into existence a society and a culture that were recognizably Christian."[5] "It had established undisputed sway over almost all aspects of the national life."[6] But the problem was that it was lost in the society it helped fashion.[7] "By the end of the century it had become more the creature of American culture than its creator."[8]

"Culture being molded by religious faith was to end with a religious faith being molded by culture."[9] Its self understanding was by this time not sufficiently grounded in a distinction ultimately located apart from the cultural mainstream of America. It had labored to define America, and ended up not able to understand itself apart from America as a socio-cultural entity. Protestantism progressively elevated the practical fruits of religion. It measured religion by the standard of individual and social change. At the same time it relativized dogmatic beliefs. A bold frank pragmatism prevailed which placed a value on religion commensurate to the individual and social quality it produced. Protestantism increasingly understood itself as the primary agent to shape cultural values and effect social change. It became deeply invested in this socio-cultural project. But this culture was bigger than Protestantism, and it was moving and changing under greater exigencies and motivations. Protestantism was aboard and culture was departing for new ports.

Protestantism's Identification With Modernity Deepens: From Arminianism to the Social Gospel

In order to understand how Protestantism's identification with its world deepened in the modern period, at least two points need to be restated about its nineteenth century setting.

First, as emphasized, Protestantism became enamored with the project of creating a successful republican society. It explicitly assumed a measure of responsibility for its success. It was their project, their task, their mission.

Second, Protestant Christian strategy for accomplishing this goal was itself deeply penetrated by the secular republican individualistic ethic. The religious power which Protestantism could release into society was not only viewed as a force for change but their view of change from one perspective was not fundamentally different from the individualistic ethic of the Founding Fathers.

The power to save society was identified as the power to save souls one by one. The saving of a soul was simultaneously the creation of an "individual" that looked and acted very much like a successful republican citizen. This point is crucial for understanding how Protestantism's close identification with its world deepened in the modern period.

In the nineteenth century, the relationship between Protestantism and its world may in part be characterized as naive and dualistic. Protestantism was saving souls *and* making republican citizens. Both goals were explicit and interrelated - saving souls and "saving" society. However, in the larger picture, this saving activity was understood as bringing the world to the eve of the biblical millennium (understood as Jesus' return).

Materially speaking, there were distinctions. The change released by revival and conversions accomplished two ends: it facilitated the republican "social" dream and it brought the church and world nearer to their millennial hope - "this gospel shall be preached in all the world then shall the end come". Millennium and the hope of successfully reconstructing society on liberal values were in the mix together, but they were not consistently identified.

Because mainstream Protestantism's primary view of the millennium was post-millennial, the door was open for a narrowed distinction between modern cultural goals and religious missional goals for society. Both came to their task with similar assumptions about improving society. Protestantism however, remained fundamentally dualistic in its world view. But, when the unsavoury effects of laissez faire led to the critique of the individualistic paradigm of society and change, a segment of mainstream Protestantism began to revise its individualistic ethic.[10] In concert with other cultural protests, the social gospel movement took up the cause of expanding the contemporary model of change beyond its preoccupation with the individual to the economic structures of society.[11] If the Founders' vision of a relatively harmonious equal citizenry was to be realized, it was not simply going to happen automatically as an outgrowth of a natural principle or law. The structuring of liberty into society as the protected first principle of the republic contained within it a hidden evil that had come to fruition. Perhaps no one saw this clearer than Rauschenbusch, who wrote in his *Christianity and the Social Crisis*:

> If it were proposed to invent some social system in which covetousness would be deliberately fostered and intensified in human nature, what system could be devised which would excel our own for this purpose? Competitive commerce exalts selfishness to the dignity of a moral principle. It pits men against one another in a gladiatorial game in which there is no mercy and in which in ninety percent of the combatants finally strew the arena. It makes Ismaels of our best men and teaches them that their hand must be against every man since every man's hand is against them. It makes men who are the gentlest and kindliest friends and neighbors, relentless taskmasters in their shops and stores, who will drain the strength of their men and pay their female employees wages on which no girl can live without supplementing them in some way.[12]

Ironically, those Protestants who broadened their social ethic [the social gospel movement] deepened Protestantism's identification with modernity. Contemporary standards of righteousness and sin certainly cried out for reform. In Protestantism's myopic attention with so-called personal vices such as drinking, theater going, dancing, gambling, it had failed to address the "weightier matters of the law." The Social Gospel movement was born because of this void. Certainly, the movement's courage to challenge culture at the level of wages, hours, workers safety, trusts, monopolies and the like, was certainly prophetic. But in extending Protestantism's social ethic beyond that of mere character development (so as to be made to embrace a more democratic social structuring of society), Protestantism's historic identity with the new world project became more consistent. This is especially apparent in Walter Rauschenbusch's thought, as Ken Cauthen points out:

> "Yet, with regard to the democratic element in American life Rauschenbusch saw a profound harmony between the values of Christ and the values of culture. Indeed, many of the faults which he found in American business could be overcome, he felt, if democratic principles were applied to the economic realm. Thus, at least with reference to democracy, it can be said that Rauschenbusch is one of those men who, in the words of H. Richard Niebuhr, 'hail Jesus as the Messiah of their society, the fulfiller of its hopes and aspirations, the perfecter of its true faith, the source of its holiest spirit.' The Jesus Rauschenbusch knows is fundamentally a 'Christ of culture'...The Social gospel is God's predestined agent to complete the idea of God. The God of the social gospel seeks the redemption of all mankind and the union of all men in a world wide brotherhood. Theology must revise its doctrine of God he contends in light of this kingdom idea!"[13]

Another example of this tendency to make the modern social project and Christianity consistent, is B. Fay Mills. Mills was a nineteenth century evangelist who

started his ministry within the individualistic ethical paradigm later to expand it to the socialist ethic. Not long after the social ethic took hold of his mind, Christianity's essential distinctivity eroded in his thinking.[14]

The reason that this segment of Protestantism, more than others, nearly lost the distinction between Christianity's goals and modernity's sociocultural project, is inherent in how it formulated its social ethic. The emergency created by the inherent weakness in the Founders' plan, tempted Protestantism to become even more deeply identified with the outcome of modernity. In a former period, Protestantism found within itself, i.e, its religious resources, a culturally relevant individualistic ethic. In the years directly before and after the turn of this century, it found within its religious sources a socialist ethic which was relevant to the crises at hand.

But in taking up this new social ethic and combining it with the already teleological orientation of nineteenth century Protestantism [i.e., Protestantism that had become enamoured with its power to change society and move it towards a "higher" goal], the stage was set for a segment of Protestantism to lose the remaining distinction it had between itself and the democratic modern vision.

As shown, the activistic change oriented Protestantism of the mid-nineteenth century had increasingly fused Christian individual and republican individual ideas and had become more optimistic and goal oriented. In principle, nothing was different about the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century social gospel movement. They did not break from the teleological activistic shape which had come to define Protestantism, nor from the close identification of democratic and Christian ideas of the human future. They merely radicalized the democratic egalitarian-fraternal idea embedded in the Founders and they correspondingly appealed to scriptural warrants that supported their social democratic reform.

The teleological-activistic propensity of Protestantism was intensified in the social gospel movement when it linked itself to the idea of Kingdom of God and attempted to access political leverage for its realization. Like Wise, the identification of Christian with the Founders' secular vision was intensified with the transition from an individual to a more inclusive, social or democratic model.

The social gospel segment of Protestantism thought it found in Christianity and within the "new" democratic ethic a common point of agreement. This more egalitarian ethic and vision for the republic [i.e., the extension of liberty and rights

horizontally] had been present from the beginning in the more idealistic of the Founders, especially Jefferson.[15] But the Founders assumed that it would occur naturally. The revival and broadening of this ethic which emerged out of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century socioeconomic condition created a new, and even more friendly and apparently compatible meeting place for Protestantism and modernity. This was thought to be modernity of necessity come of age and Protestantism's ideas of the kingdom come of age. It was a short step to identify with democratic socialistic values, abstract values of human betterment and with a social ideal of the "brotherhood of man." The broadening of the Protestant ethic from an individualistic model to a more social model, moved Protestantism even further away from the other worldly to the this worldly. The fulfillment of an individualistic soteriology ultimately leads to a heaven above, while the fulfillment of a more social-communal soteriology leads to a new earth. But what was this "new earth?" Was it really "new?" Was it the Kingdom of *God* or a deeper identification of Protestantism's God with the new world that was born in 1776? Ironically, in the social gospel movement, Protestantism realized both its most prophetic and its most identified relation to modernity. The grand vision of changing overarching social structures rather than puny individuals with perverse natures seemed to contain eschatological implications.

When Protestants began to entertain the idea that the real source of the problem of human corruption was environmental and the real power for change was persuasion and legislation, they were on the verge of a complete break with their Puritan forefathers. The intransigence of human corruption rooted in a depraved nature and the idea of a permanent cleavage between righteous and the wicked made the Puritans true advocates of "fixity" (i.e., the control of a wicked world versus the transformation of it].

In the final analysis, within the social gospel movement some distinctions remained between its social vision and a purely secularist vision. As Ruether points out, within this movement there persisted among some the conviction that social change must also be accompanied by a deeper work of change by God's grace in the human heart.[16] Even so, McLoughlin argues that at the turn of the century Protestantism went in two different directions. One direction was individualistic, which focused on the depraved nature that awaited conversion with a corresponding

social mission directed at helping and changing individuals. The other way focused on evil social structures that awaited the legal extension of the Founders' democratic promise imbued with Jesus' ethic of love, brotherhood and justice. The spokesmen for this movement, however, did not completely eliminate a line of distinction between the future coming of the kingdom initiated from the side of a transcendent God and the present occurrence of the kingdom through the works of humanity interpreted as the immanence of God.[17] For the social gospel movement, the goals of modernity and the goals of Protestantism had become thoroughly suffused with only very weak distinctions between these remaining.

The Social Gospel and "Fixity"?

Economic realities at the turn of this century challenged the veracity of the Founders' vision requiring something more of modernity. The policy of laissez faire led to the rich becoming richer. Rather than leading to greater harmony and equality, laissez faire served to protect existing concentrations of wealth. The social risk inherent in the policy of imposing the least possible restriction on individual liberty was not offset by virtue. What appeared to be a blueprint for the realization of sublime harmonies, became an implement which effected extreme social disparities. With the industrial age came severe poverty, soaring unemployment, the exploitation of labor by capital, a boom and bust economy, urbanism bringing with it a corresponding increase in health and criminal problems, all of which fed off of the naive promise of laissez faire. The irony here is that America's self-conscious embrace of the premise of laissez faire was in part bound to the critique of British power by the colonists. Against the authority of a venerated political institution, America appealed to a higher authority which possessed its own authority. By appealing to a principle out of the reach of human control, the Founders accessed rights that could not in principle be subverted or contravened. By canonizing that artifice, the stage was set for the cultural baptism of socio-economic disparity. That which was exploited to break power vis-à-vis England was simultaneously the implement to entrench and protect the new investitures of power and wealth in the new world.

Part of the problem was that the economic means the Founders had conceived of as underwriting the realization of their vision were eroding. These were the relatively simple availability of property, skills and an accessible market where one's

labor and skills could be gainfully sold. Through these, one could achieve reasonable prosperity and security. As the nineteenth century progressed, these tangible means steadily deteriorated under the increasing dominance of a technologically driven industrial capitalism creating an intransigent labor class. In order for the dream to be salvaged, society's commitment to laissez faire had to be relativized so that it was necessary to use political and collective power to achieve what did not arise naturally. This is a familiar history and does not need detailing here. It is the shift that occurs in this that points up the character of modernity come-of-age [i.e., the shift away from strict adherence to laissez faire grounded in the presupposition of natural law, harmony and toward the use of collective and political power].

The necessary qualifying of laissez faire discloses the new edge of modernity's crisis. No hidden universalism existed which ensured social harmony. The nation had saddled itself with a policy of autonomous individualism which was causing enormous social injustice. In the end, individualism equaled economic elitism. The eventuality of reaching for political power to rehabilitate the Founders' republican vision was predictable. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century social conditions became the seed bed for a new growth of centralized power. History had shown harmony and natural law to be fiction. The new recourse to collective and political power that took hold in America at the turn of this century, as necessary as this was, points up the fact that ultimately there existed an antithesis between the Founders' vision and the social principles they postulated as necessary and sufficient to achieve that vision. The reach for political and judicial leverage against the abuse of economic liberty is a conservative stabilizing development. It signals within the economic sphere what modernity creates in every sphere of society: a propensity to reach for power and human intervention in the face of the absence of cultural design. The fact that no harmonious egalitarian citizenry emerged out of a policy of liberal values, as postulated, signaled the problem that was inherent in modernity. In spite of the original confidence in the social integrity of individual liberty, centralized political power was revisited.

In its interest in political power, the social gospel movement is similar to the Religious Right discussed in Section B of this chapter. While the social gospel movement reached for political leverage to limit economic liberty, the Religious Right reached for political power to limit socio-moral liberty. Each held a religious vision of

the republic, believing in a "Christian" or "Judeo-Christian" America. Of course, the substance of their visions was different – social justice versus individual morality.

As will be shown in Section B, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the policy of individual liberty had not yet progressed to the stage where it was having a deeply corrosive effect on culturally embedded moral values and boundaries. When the fraying of moral consensuses occurred, a segment of Protestantism renewed its interest in political power in order to achieve or maintain the corporate or national Christian identity that they imagined had existed.

According to the thesis paradigm "fixity" and "freedom" both express a relationship between Christianity and the greater socio-cultural world that is very close, if not in some way identified. The difference is that "fixity" sustains that identity through recourse to external leverage (hence the term "regulative") while "freedom" represents an optimism that the nation's "Christianness" can be maintained by placing the church's religious resources in service to the principle of individual liberty, so that people will exercise freedom in a responsible way (hence the term "integrative"). In this endeavor, the church's mission and theology were revised so as to be compatible with, and supportive to, the modern value of liberty. When viewed in this light, the social gospel movement clearly falls under the classification "freedom." It remained basically optimistic in the democratic construction of the Founders' liberal values. When the social gospel movement sought recourse to law, it was in order to change problematic environmental conditions so that the Founders' vision of democracy [which they also believed was the essential framework of the Christian vision of the kingdom] could occur. They were theologically and missionally revisionary in order to integrate Christianity to social democratic goals and values.

The religious fixity discussed in the next sections, solicits political packing for religio-moral "values" which are not formally constituted in the polity of the nation. While the social gospel movement found scriptural support for its reforms, this support was optional. At the end of the day, it was asking for nothing more than what its secular democratic socialist counterparts were calling for. This, in part, explains why there was a collapse of distinction between the social gospel and democratic national goals.

Protestantism's Optimistic Involvement With Modernity Deepens: From Evangelical Empiricism to the Liberal Doctrine of Immanence

The situation in which Protestantism found itself around the turn of this century is suggested by the following series of comparisons. During the Colonial Period, there existed a world view characterized by an anthropological dualism colored in Augustinian Calvinistic hues. Humanness was defined within a theocentric relation that correlated the transcendent sovereign God and the particularity of the human. If this correlation was severed, individual and social chaos was thought to result. The material means to keep these together was the purified religion of the Reformed faith made plain through scripture. Formally, these two were kept together by the two God-ordained institutions, Church and State.[18]

In the Jeffersonian Enlightenment model, humanness was defined within a this-world humanistic framework. While the person was not viewed as complete in himself or immediately safe for liberal society, the means for achieving these were intrinsic to the self and the collective selves of society. Out of these presuppositions, government as a social contract emerged with an emphasis on the importance of public education and private religion. These two sources of American society, one religious (Puritanism), the other secular (Enlightenment, i.e. the Jeffersonian guild), lived on together during the last half of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century antebellum period.

Two phenomena kept them from fully polarizing and colliding. The historical factors which arose out of the secular side were (1) the common cause of the Revolution, and (2) the pressures of pluralism created by original diversity intensified by immigration. Also, from the Revolutionary beginning, the dissemination of Enlightenment thought spread through the populace by a massive tract and book campaign, promoted by the well-established and influential aristocratic elites and the Masons. Most importantly, the Enlightenment provided the resources necessary to build a national identity around liberty and equality.

On the religious side, evangelical empiricism moderated Protestantism both institutionally and doctrinally, making it more compatible with the Jeffersonian premises. While evangelicalism certainly defined humanness relationally or dualistically, this relation was more consistently sustained by an empirical experience.[19] In other words, evangelicalism (particularly nineteenth century

evangelicalism), emphasized the human and individual element of religion while correspondingly moderating both doctrinal and ecclesiastical elements.[20] This occurred at the very time the notion of the individual in the American experience was emerging on essentially secular-economic grounds.

The evangelicalism of the nineteenth century became vulnerable to losing itself as it increasingly measured religion by change and experience, i.e. by its human and social value.[21] It tended to abstract religion from its formal moorings, allowing it to become more permeable to a cultural ethos and ideals. Insofar as it tipped away from its doctrinal-biblical side and toward a human experiential pietistic side, it shared similar empirical common ground with the Jeffersonian Enlightenment position.

Rather than accepting the privatism [i.e., organized religion as an esoteric voluntary association] that was thought by the Jefferson guild to be the consequence of disestablishment and the first Amendment, Protestantism saw in its evangelicalism the new face of its social universalism, albeit a qualified 'universalism'. And in principle, it was precisely this element of human transformation on which the compatibility rode. By its nature, evangelicalism was precarious. It could slide in either direction.[22] It could shift back toward its biblical-dogmatic moorings (exploiting and intensifying and thereby distorting its authoritative principle), or forward toward a greater openness to and preoccupation with the human experience (thereby obscuring or losing its authoritative principle). In other words, its correlation to "objective" external fixtures was under cultural strain.

The spirit of the times pulled evangelicalism out of balance toward an emphasis on immanent--human and social transformation. Protestantism came to be permeated by the unwarranted optimism which accompanied the progressive severing of objective and external moorings. Evangelical pietism was one of the major bridges, for mainstream Protestantism's more consistent involvement in the goals and premises of modernity.[23] This shift toward the subjective predisposed Protestantism toward the more radical ideas of immanence coming from continental philosophy and theology.

Protestantism's focus on the experiential subjective elements of its religion was not the same as understanding Christianity within a consistent immanental framework.[24] Religious experience stood in juxtaposition to a biblical - revealed

locus of authority. This dynamic paralleled the Enlightenment confidence of that period that understood reason and experience in juxtaposition to natural law. In America, the shift toward a more consistent immanental understanding of truth would occur toward the end of the nineteenth century. In both the secular and the religious spheres, revision was necessary to accomplish this. In the wake of these revisions, Protestantism's identification with modernity reached its high water mark..

Theoretically, the Founding Fathers' ideas of liberty arose out of both modern and pre-modern ideas. Their political design to organize society as a guarantor of individual liberty grew out of a new Enlightenment confidence about human capacity to use reason and become virtuous. The potential necessary for people to use liberty responsibly resided within their nature. The risk inherent in liberty was offset by their optimistic anthropology. Liberty would not jeopardize the socio-moral integrity of society because citizens would naturally rise to the new social challenge and opportunity. The Founding Fathers' vision was born in the functional dualism characteristic of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Their appeal to the accessibility of truth via reason and experience was in part contradicted by Judeo-Christian premises. The absoluteness of design, discernable in nature's law and order was in part a transmutation of the absoluteness of the Christian personal God of the Bible. The deistic framework of the thought of the Founders, abstracted creation from the creator personal God of the Bible, giving it much greater autonomy. Accordingly, it tended to sever the direct human connection to this creator God (supported through Revelation) and substitute a relation to a master design sustained through reason.

By dignifying reason and experience, the Founders invited the commencement of a *human* history. But by correlating reason and experience to a dogma of fixed law, they unwittingly invited the persistence over history of a rigid, absolute design. There is a tension between human freedom and absolute design. The most one could hope for was that humans could harmonize with the fixed natural moral order of an impersonal universe. This deistic world view, indebted to Newtonian physics, persisted in nineteenth century America and allowed for a degree of compatibility between Protestantism and Enlightenment schools. Whether revealed through scripture or discerned through reason, morality was derived from one ultimate fixed design. Protestantism scrambled to show its reasonability and the Enlightenment

school granted the "basic" religio-moral truths of Christian universality. This "Fraternity" was possible because both schools remained dualistic. The individual was in relation to an absolute truth outside him. But this "outside" locus of truth contravened human freedom.[25]

Generally speaking, the revision that occurred in the late nineteenth century attempted to save the autonomy of reason and experience by reconceiving the character of natural law. The idea of a fixed absolute design, which through reason brought men and women into proper relation, was reconceived as organic to human nature and human community. No one definitive, accessible design existed, with which humans could harmonize and achieve positive ends. Truth was immanent to the life process. The "new" order, theoretically speaking, had a life of its own, immanent to human nature. In this way, reason and experience were viewed less instrumentally (i.e. instruments whereby humans could bring themselves into harmony with a law higher than themselves and fundamentally outside themselves). Rather, reason and experience were conceived as liberated from a rigid design, finding their own ends and fulfillment. In this way, modernity came to view the truth as residential, intensive and progressively unfolding. All particular expressions of truth were fragmentary, transitory and finite.

The effect was to sever the correlation of humanness "upward" or "outward" in relation to a transcendent God or a static design and order. Modernity was portrayed in an optimistic, progressive framework. And it removed all serious critical bases to question its development. In the end the belief in an immanent informing principle to humanness and society came up against the harsh realities of history.

The grim social facts arising out of the industrial revolution, the Great War and the depression sobered modernity's optimism. Both the world view that life was organized around a fixed archetypal pattern in which humans could achieve harmony through reason and virtue, and the world view that nature and human nature had a greater law of truth at work within itself, were postulated fictions. Although they served the purpose of underwriting the optimistic social venture of modernity, in the end they obscured the inherent risks and flaws that came with that endeavor. Modernity, under the influence of the Enlightenment, had broken with the pessimistic view of human nature characteristic of Protestantism, especially the Reformed faith that dominated colonial America. As a consequence, there existed a naive confidence

that a rational, virtuous person and a relatively equal society would emerge out of a political matrix of freedom.

Theoretically, that which stood in the way of a complete identification between Protestantism and the modern sociocultural idealism, was the persistence of a Christian dualism. It is one thing to emphasize and elevate the empirical - experiential elements of the faith. It is another thing to reinterpret the faith within a consistent doctrine of the immanence of God. Through most of the nineteenth century, Protestantism held to its traditional distinctions -- this world and the next, heaven and hell, a sinful and a innocent state of human nature, revelation and reason. The foundation of this dualism was a sovereign transcendent God and sinful humanity in a context of redemption, which placed this world and the kingdom of God in fundamental discontinuity. These distinctions were moderated practically by revivalism and theologically by Arminianism and post-millennialism.

Beyond these two forces, several theological developments also contributed within mainstream nineteenth century Protestantism. In the early decades of the century, the Scottish school of common sense realism argued that "from his own innate common sense, man could 'intuitively' derive beyond the shadow of a doubt the validity of such abstract ideas as immortality, the existence of the soul, the concept of rewards and punishments after death."[26] In this theological and philosophical development, which had a pervasive influence both inside and outside mainstream Protestantism, the religious and moral truths once known only through Revelation could be derived from "observing men's inner consciousness."[27]

Inner consciousness consisted of what could be empirically deduced as universally true from observing instinctual social and moral habits and patterns of human nature. This did not mean Revelation was made redundant or needed revising. Rather, inner consciousness was a way of witnessing to Revelation's truthfulness. Nevertheless, by building this argument, Protestantism dignified anthropocentric grounds for deriving truth. The primary point of departure from the deistic Enlightenment school was the belief that for real moral change and reformation to occur, not only was human reason, will and education necessary, but more so, divine grace. Both parties however, were focused on the human subject and empirically verified truth.

Although in the middle years of the nineteenth century Protestantism

continued to be enchanted with exploring an anthropocentric locus for evangelical truth, the attention came to be focused on feelings, emotions, intuition and imagination. This was the period which McLoughlin calls "Romantic Evangelicalism."[28] The primary figure outside mainstream evangelicalism who presented the most consistent expression of the romantic emphasis was Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson countered cool rationality with a doctrine of God's immanence in the human soul. God could be known directly, intuitively known and felt, by the heart, not the head. The first language to proceed from an encounter with God was poetry, and the place where God was experienced was in life. In nature, birth, children, motherhood and the great mysteries and cycles of existence, humans experienced a pulsating emanating divine presence. Emerson saw Jesus Christ as one who was most fully responsive to this divinity in life. Jesus Christ, he claimed, was just one among many incarnations of God in humanity. "He (Jesus Christ) saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world." According to Emerson, Jesus said, in essence, "would you see God, see me or see thee"[29]

While evangelicals did not sever their ties to revealed truth or classic Christian beliefs, with Emerson they came to emphasize the direct intuitive perception of truth. North American Protestantism's greatest preacher of the day, Henry Ward Beecher, and its best theologian, Horace Bushnell, both strongly reflected the shift toward the heart religion of the day. Beecher's preaching appealed to the aesthetic dimension of truth. This included the personality of Jesus and the love of God rather than the justice of God. Bushnell developed a view of "familial grace" which, in contradistinction to crisis conversions characteristic of revivalism emphasized the role of home and motherhood.

It was not, however, until the last decades of the nineteenth century that Protestantism's turn toward the immanence of God in humanity would fully mature. Only a serious revision of Protestant thought could bridge the gap between modernity come of age and Protestantism's historic Christian dualism. For such a revision, Americans relied on European theologians, primarily Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Only Schleiermacher is reviewed here, as his thinking is sufficient to demonstrate in principle what needed to occur in order for a more consistent involvement of Protestantism with modernity to take place.

Schleiermacher's importance for Protestantism is precisely in the juxtaposition of the Enlightenment on the one hand, and the evangelical center of the Reformation on the other. In the larger framework, it is not his polemic over where religion is to be grounded, the ethical realm in conjunction with the will, the realm of thought in conjunction with the powers of reason or piety in conjunction with the feeling of absolute dependence, that is of enduring significance. Rather, it is the creation of a basis whereby the Christian tradition in the Protestant evangelical heritage could be united with epistemological assumptions not fundamentally contradictory to the terms of the modern world. Like many, Schleiermacher recognized that the grounds on which truth claims could be made, had changed.[30] For many, the church's tradition was simply anachronistic and redundant. Despite the mediating efforts to build a 'deeper' compatibility between rational circumspect truth and the church's dogmatic truth, increasing alienation between these two concepts of truth was occurring. Schleiermacher is to be credited for his pioneer work in formalizing a theological union. His epistemological analysis possesses an underlying critical compatibility with the Enlightenment consensus on the anthropological grounding of truth. By tying the Christian faith to this epistemological basis, he would not only save it from redundancy (from the standpoint of Enlightenment premises) but involve it in a new crisis: a misplaced confidence in humanity and the simple immanence of truth within humanity toward which the post - Enlightenment world was inevitably moving. Schleiermacher's initial "question" and "breakthrough" is over the "true" source or nature of human religiousness.

But Schleiermacher posited an alternative. He centered on piety grounded in feeling, understood as a precognitive consciousness of absolute dependence. This, Schleiermacher urged, was universal, and lies below the superficial realm of the flux of existence in which the human being lives out of the interchange of desires, necessity and environmental forces. An analysis of human nature at this level betrays the existence of finitude in a setting of infinite unity; finite distinction in a setting of transcendent infinity. Schleiermacher argued that finite self-hood or self-consciousness was derived from a feeling of infinity transcending the self.

Absolute dependence describes precisely this analysis of self-consciousness. Piety, defined first as dependence, and second as behavior consonant with this deeper awareness, represents Schleiermacher's understanding of religion. The true ground of

religion is not reasoned truth leading to changed behavior, not the categorical imperative of the behaving subject leading to disinterested morality, but piety arising out of the feeling of absolute dependence, or, in theological language, "God consciousness" expressing itself in acts of devotion and love.

This discovery for Schleiermacher explained both the true source of beliefs as well as accounting for diversity in its conceptual formulation. By beginning with piety (and not doctrinal knowledge) as the foundation of religion, he emphasized the relativity of the claims of knowledge of the church. Beliefs and doctrines are the linguistical and conceptual formulations made within the accidental and historical impingement of sundry forces, which are themselves expressions of this underlying piety. It is important to emphasize that by making anthropology the starting point for religion, beliefs and traditions were not being dismissed. The fact that doctrines are not the basis of religion does not mean for Schleiermacher that they should not be taken seriously.

It is Schleiermacher's revision of the soteriological or evangelical breakthrough (which was the centerpiece of the Reformation) which discloses the path that liberal Protestantism would take in removing the theological obstacles between itself and the modern world.

The familiar Reformation theological slogan was solo gratia, sola fide and sola Scriptura. The formal locus was scripture, the instrumental, faith, and the material, Christ. What Schleiermacher did was to correlate his anthropological analysis of absolute dependence to the Reformation's instrumental arm of faith.[31] This equation between dependence and faith is one of the central meanings of Reformation faith. Luther and Calvin, in a way not fundamentally dissimilar, argued for an understanding of faith as trust or personal confidence before God.[32]

What constitutes a revision of Reformation thought is the location of faith in Schleiermacher's system.[33] By characterizing the intrinsic nature of faith as a universal anthropological quality that could be named absolute dependence, Schleiermacher gave faith, understood as dependence, an autonomy and preeminence it did not enjoy in Reformation evangelicalism.[34] By this autonomy, the entire axis of the Reformation was shifted.

This is not to underestimate the subtlety of Schleiermacher's work. By identifying faith with this anthropological a priori of dependence, and making it the

source of piety which becomes the genesis of conceptuality or "word," the Pauline order to which Reformers appealed, i.e., "faith comes by hearing of the word," was reversed.[35] By Schleiermacher's logic this "reversal" was reintegrated within the Protestant tradition. Faith came through hearing, i.e. via the preaching and ministry of the word. This clarifies, awakens and stirs what is there. It does not in the absolute sense create it.[36] Schleiermacher kept the extrinsic mediation of faith via "word", but the priority of the word as the absolute source of faith was compromised. The word became a resource or support to faith. In the final analysis, the source of faith was an anthropological phenomenon.

The importance of this for Schleiermacher is more fully recognized by how he conceived of the material content of salvation. Building out of pietist post-Reformation development, Schleiermacher focused the transformed life. His interpretation was, of course, not constructed along the old pietist ideas, but out of the most astute intellectual and empirical insights into human nature of the time. Nevertheless, his debt to pietism is often noted as an important key to understanding the evolution of his thought.[37]

Shifting the center of Christianity from doctrine to piety, has its roots in the pietistic reaction against doctrinal formalism. This shift represents a distortion of the Reformation. The changed life of the Reformation was thoroughly grounded in the priority of a changed relationship before God through the extrinsic historical redemptive work of Christ.[38] The changed life of pietism, by contrast, became preeminent and increasingly studied in a way that abstracted it from its former Reformation setting.

Schleiermacher's foundational premise of absolute human dependence cleared the way for piety to assume the definitive content of soteriology. In short, his anthropological insight of dependence became the organizing motif of soteriology. In this, Schleiermacher revised the material content of the soteriological priority of the Reformation.

At stake in this argument is Luther's conception of justification by faith. It cannot be denied that the early Luther held a view of justification which was primarily conceived in gracious Augustinian terms and involved human transformation. Only well into the Reformation did his objective views come to be fully clarified.[39]

It is no surprise that, for some, an evangelical Reformation precedent is

thought to exist for the priority, if not the exclusivity, of a subjective soteriological emphasis.[40] Such an interpretation fails to come to grips not only with the presence and significance of the objective pole for its importance to the coherence of its evangelical thought, but the robust humanistic character of the Reformation's understanding of the Christian life; one in which freedom and unconditional acceptance constituted its initial impulse.

In the nexus of justification and faith, Luther first clarified faith in relation to grace in contrast with works. Faith was viewed individually and personally, rather than ecclesiastically and formally. Second, he clarified Christian righteousness. Before God, righteousness was complete (i.e., justification); in the believer, it was always incomplete and flawed (i.e., sanctification). While he could speak profoundly about the Christian life of faith, his mature overarching theology emphasized distinction and priority between the subjective and objective of Christ's work.. GC Berkhower argues this point when he writes,

> "The forensic justification of the Formula of Concord is not a slip into the net of scholastic, intellectual order of salvation; it is the end result of a desire to keep the *sola fide* and keep it pure... This was the uniting truth of the sixteenth century...It is the preaching of grace, sheer, unalloyed, unmerited grace... Forensic justification has to do with what is *extra nos*, with the imputation of what Christ has done on our behalf. This was, indeed, the original disposition of the Reformation...Thus, in the forensic idea of justification the *sola fide-sola gratia* finds its purest incarnation. The doctrine of forensic justification embodies the gracious act of God in Christ Jesus, whom man can take to himself in faith alone."[41]

Ultimately, justification was grounded not only in a gracious (Augustinian) God but an objective work of Christ. While some statements of Luther are admittedly ambiguous, they are not sufficient to supplant the witness of his mature thought. It may be that scholastic formalism and German pietism are not only to be seen as action and reaction, but two siblings of the Reformation, neither one a true heir of its evangelical witness.

For Schleiermacher, as well as the prominent liberal theologians who came after him (such as Ritschl and Herrmann) Christology became the instrumental rather than the material means of salvation. The historicity of Jesus's role in salvation is maintained, but this role is more properly identified as a means to an end. For Schleiermacher, Jesus functions as one man who, in a definitively and quantitatively

unique degree, embodies God consciousness. Here, the importance of the historic Jesus is not relinquished.

What cannot be denied is its new instrumental priority. Jesus is relative to an anthropologically identified potentiality. As such, it is Jesus' humanity that survives and is made especially important in Schleiermacher's revision, while the dogmatic ideas of his divine nature are revised accordingly. Divinity, insofar as it is applicable to Jesus, is a matter of the quantity or perfection of God consciousness and therefore his difference is one of degree and not of kind, although the degree of Jesus God consciousness is such, that in some sense he must be viewed as fundamentally different. In the following statement, Heron captures the subtlety of Schleiermacher's position:

> "God-consciousness also supplies the key to the person of the Redeemer and the redemption he has accomplished. Jesus was divine in the sense that he was 'distinguished from all (other men) by the constant potency of his god-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of god in him.' Similarly, 'The Redeemer assumes believers into the power of his God-consciousness, and this is his redemptive activity.' The awareness of God which is fragmentarily and partially there in all men was fully and perfectly formed in Jesus, and spreads from him to those who believe in him. This is the essential meaning of the old dogma which described his as god incarnate and as our Savior and Redeemer. It is also the meaning of the doctrine that he alone was perfect and wholly free from sin.
>
> "The Christian consciousness of God is thus, for Schleiermacher, inextricably bound up with Jesus himself, and derived from him. It is not simply a general or universal awareness of God, though it gathers up and refines the more general consciousness to be found in other religions and at the very core of human existence as such. But it is only in and through the Christian modification of the God-consciousness that the significance of Jesus can be grasped, and it is in terms of God-consciousness that his person and work, who he was and what he achieved, must be interpreted." [42]

Comprehending Jesus' christological mission within an anthropological framework was crucial. Revising the divinity of Christ around the material priority of Schleiermacher's anthropological goal cut liberal Protestantism free from the Reformation's objective and theocentric orientation. The authoritative grounds for liberalism's claim could not be sustained, either by scripture (which was subjected to extensive criticism) or by the person and work of Christ (that traditionally stood both in union but in qualitative distinction from humanity). It is the humanity of Christ

that is familiar and pliable within an anthropological analysis. The divinity of Christ, even following the most rigorous attempts to explain it, possesses a residual strangeness. In dialectical theology, as in the Reformation, the dogmatic view of Jesus Christ was exploited and correlated with a soteriology which found its priority in an interpretation of the human predicament that had its focus in the gulf between a righteous God and sinful humanity.

Schleiermacher's critical approach yielded a Jesus who was familiar to the nineteenth century, one in which an exceptional level of God consciousness was developed. It is not surprising that it was to this very area, the incarnation, that Barth would return to regain his footing. This objective theocentric pole began foundationally with the righteousness of God. Its radical distinction from the human would in time be exploited by dialectical theologians, both to regain the church's discontinuity with society, and as a transcendent anchor (over against the post-Enlightenment crisis of "fixity").

The soteriological axis fundamentally shifted in Schleiermacher, so that Christ was enlisted in a religious anthropological goal of dependence. The Reformation Christ, by contrast, was anchored in a predicament that was defined theologically. In Reformation thought, the first problem humanity has is the "wrath of God." This starting point for soteriology has something of a strangeness to it. It begins with the radical disjuncture of God and humanity that cannot be overcome from the human side. Within Reformation thought, Jesus Christ bridges this in his life and death, and scripture comes to be increasingly appreciated as witnessing to this peculiar human problem and resolution. This, in principle, was the real genesis of the Reformation's idea of truth, albeit it was a fledgling, vulnerable beginning. It was susceptible to being subtly distorted, so that weight might be placed either on the formal components scripture and doctrine or existential components faith and piety.

By making clear the evangelical soteriological center of the church (and clarifying its authoritative preeminence), the Reformation broke the power of ecclesiastical authority, but in so doing, it both created and increased the vulnerability of the church to the modern world development. "evangelical authority" is by nature especially vulnerable.[43] It is in nineteenth century Protestantism, not Catholicism, that the main cultural-philosophical synthesis first occurred. Both Barth and the dialectical theologians around him, as Schleiermacher before him, recognized that

Protestantism (precisely because of its evangelical center) possessed a theological character that could be exploited. Barth attempted to radicalize the Reformation's evangelical breakthrough, emphasizing its objective or Christocentric side, thereby creating a dialectical implement of critique brought to bear against the post-Enlightenment assumptions and liberal Protestantism. Schleiermacher, on the other hand, revised that evangelical center on its subjective and anthropocentric side, thus making it vulnerable to a marriage to post-Enlightenment idealism. This revision, created the liberal-modernist experiment.

Socially and practically the problem can be identified as one of the church's uncritical openness to the modern world. But at a deeper level, it is about Protestantism's involvement in the western world's struggle to transform and relocate its authoritative principle this side of the Enlightenment.

In the larger picture, the significance of Schleiermacher's theological revision has to do with whether or not Christianity can be integrated into the anthropological foundation of the modern world.

From one perspective, Schleiermacher's "evangelical revision" is merely incidental in this story, since it is not the evangelical element that survives into the twentieth century, but the religious element. But from another perspective it is important, first, because it points up what is vulnerable in Protestantism and second, it discloses a shift from the transcendent theocentric revealed moorings of the church to a conceptualized anthropocentric mooring. In principle, of course, it is not the definitive nature of Schleiermacher's work that is important, but how and what he did to link Protestantism to the epistemological terms acceptable to the modern world. He accomplished this by prioritizing the subjective faith element in the evangelical equation. Barth later exploited and radicalized the transcendent "objective" theocentric element of the Reformation's evangelical equation via the *revealed* word as a response that served to reclaim a proper church-world differentiation.

Modernism reconstrued the location of truth from a position outside and above the individual and society to one within. In nineteenth century America, society lived with two reference points for social norms and moral boundaries -- scripture and natural law (corresponding to revelation and reason). Both were viewed as absolute and objective, corresponding to a divine givenness that transcended and preceded the human encounter with the truth.

Modern culture's vision was the emancipation of humans from the heteronomous forces of necessity by diminishing the rigid natural law design and elevating an immanent model of truth. Liberal Protestantism opened up a serious conversation with this model of truth. In so doing, it surrendered its conceptual justification of correlating society to explicitly "Christian" (read Protestant) values and beliefs, as normative criteria for social boundaries. The corresponding intensification and deepening of biblical inerrancy on rational grounds had within it the opposite conclusion.

The movement toward immanence had its origin in European neoplatonism, imported by some late nineteenth and early twentieth century American philosophers and theologians. The problem was not its ideas of the immanence of God, spirit or mind. Christianity always postulated the immanence of God's spirit to the human spirit. Some form of idealism seemed imperative to save the Enlightenment from a barren materialism. Without these developments originating with Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher and Hegel around the end of the eighteenth-century, the "enlightened man" was destined to lose freedom to a mechanistically determined universe. The immanence of divine mind, truth, or goodness, however it was conceived, was necessary to save *humanity* from a materialistic abyss.

However, from the standpoint of Christianity, this effort to conceive of the eternal as in some way lodged in the temporal, the spiritual in the material, compromised the human dependence on a a unique revelation of truth via scripture and the Christ event. The door was opened for humanity and the world to be viewed in a more positive, optimistic and developmental way.

What was once grounded wholly outside the human except by the gift (grace) of the Holy Spirit working through the testimony of scripture[44] came to be variously construed as intrinsic to the created make-up of humanity. On this difference rides the relationship of the church to its world. To the degree the church viewed truth as intrinsically lodged in human nature and world (however that is philosophically construed) it conceived its mission as one of employing its religion in service of the sociocultural development of its world. If, however, the truth that saves is lodged outside of the human experience, and only made known by the testimony of the gospel and scripture, the church will take up its proper work as a witness and response to that testimony.

Within the world, within nature and human nature, within history, there was the resonance of eternal mind. In the absolute idealism that dominated the time [1900 - 1930's and beyond] the identity between the world and Mind was virtually complete. But for most strains of liberalism, it was not necessary to embrace this identity in a fully radical manner. Immanence, as a direction and as a new framework to understand God and truth, was sufficient.

American liberalism may be understood as a project to subject Christianity to this one principle of immanence, which guaranteed, as Kenneth Cauthen pointed out, three contemporary interests: *continuity, autonomy* and *dynamism.*[45] *Continuity* emphasized the inherent unity of this world, making suspect traditional distinctions: this world and the next, heaven and hell, a sinful and innocent state of human nature, revelation and reason. *Autonomy* emphasized that no pronouncements, truths, or values existed over a person that were not first within that person. In this way, freedom was not violated in principle. Regarding the nature of the church's truth, autonomy was fully evident as a principle. No matter how Bible truth was construed, it was not allowed to be in ultimate tension with reason. Dynamism denoted development and openness: truth was a constantly emerging *phenomenon.*

This radical revision is one manifestation of Protestantism's cultural fusion. It is American Protestantism's historic entrenchment in its new world sociocultural political project come to flower. Its vision was not one of building the church. Rather, it focused on religion's relation to building modern culture and society. Arthur C. McGiffert said it this way: "A religion that is to promote and sustain democracy must first of all be a religion of faith in man... Religious education in a democracy should not be such as to encourage the delusive belief in supernatural agencies and dependence upon them, but it should be such as to convince everybody that things can be controlled and molded by the power of man."[46] This is the more extreme Arminian notion in Charles Finney's theology gone to seed.

Those who were less involved in this revision were by that fact not necessarily less distinguished from the cultural shift. In one sense, the "liberals" at the turn of the century were less schizophrenic. They recognized the cultural shift and knew that unless Protestantism was integrated with modernity, it would forfeit its position (which evidently it lost regardless). But from the standpoint of the times, the creative theological movement of liberalism is to be credited at least for their awareness that

modernity was changing. If Protestantism wanted to maintain its identity, revisions were necessary. Many of those Protestants who were less sympathetic with liberalism were no less enmeshed in the changing cultural milieu. H. Richard Niebuhr wrote, "The compromise of the church with anthropocentrism has come almost imperceptibly in the course of its collaboration in the work of culture".[47]

Summary

Heretofore it has been argued that the Founders did not simply introduce the American colonies to a naked idea of freedom and independence. Rather, they presented freedom in a framework of corollary ideas which were of deistic Enlightenment origin. As demonstrated in Chapter Three, because of nineteenth century Protestantism's close identification with the new republican venture, it assimilated these new social and anthropological ideas. Even so, substantive distinctions remained. As this section has attempted to demonstrate, that which characterizes the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century modernist movement in mainstream Protestantism, is the erosion of these distinctions and an even more consistent attempt to contribute to modernity on terms fundamentally in harmony with, and complementary to, its goals and premises. This is best summarized by returning to these corollary ideas of freedom and noting the extent to which the modernists achieved agreement with them. For the sake of brevity, these ideas may be identified as (1) the individualistic ethic; (2) virtue; (3) reason; (4) fraternity and (5) progress.

The Individual Ethic

Antebellum Protestantism basically embraced the individual claim of republicanism and provided religious support for it. Salvation was directed at saving and remaking individuals. Modernists argued that the moral support conversion lent to the republican polity of individual liberty was not enough to prevent it from causing destructive social problems. Recourse to legislative power was required to extend the promise of liberty horizontally, i.e., democratically. As such, the modernists sought legal measures to accomplish the liberal social vision which the Founders believed would flow naturally from laissez faire liberty and which the evangelicals thought would occur because of the support that regeneration would lend. As pointed out, this

shift in the Protestant modernists represents a weakening in their commitment to and optimism in the power of conversion, and simultaneously a strengthening of their belief in the recreative power of politics. This of course led them to become more consistently aligned to secular social goals.

Virtue

The idea of virtue in pure republicanism is basically pelagian. The Protestant who dominated nineteenth century certainly believed that virtue and liberty were linked, but they contended that virtue ultimately derives from evangelical piety which requires human cooperation with divine power. The virtue the republic needed was available through revival. This represented a step away from their Puritan forefathers which viewed the world through dualistic and deterministic lenses. For them, the masses could not achieve true virtue - they could not change. But they held their view in an era not yet overtaken by change and progress. Nineteenth century Protestantism did not have that luxury and accommodated their view of human change to the new climate of hope, optimism and progress which was born out of the Enlightenment empowered revolutionary events.

Protestant modernists must be viewed in much the same light. They lived at a time when laissez faire economic liberty had gone to seed. In the face of the problems of their day, it was difficult to remain committed to the belief that conversion was all that was needed to save society from the ill effects of individual liberty. As a result, they shed much of the remaining pessimism in their anthropology. The new focus was not on changing a person's perverse nature but rather evil social structures. This shift in focus further moderated their historic view of human depravity, leaving the distinctions remaining between Protestant modernists and eighteenth century pelagian deists very weak.

Reason

The compatibility between reason and revelation which antebellum Protestantism thought it would always enjoy, ended when reason's link to an absolute objective design gave way to a more organic immanent model of truth. Protestantism was left with two choices in the face of this transition. It could either deepen its claim to objective truth of scripture, employing rational arguments to attest to this fact, or it

could join the search for a new paradigm of truth which was more profound, i.e., more immanent to nature and history. It took both courses. The modernists were convinced that what was really valid in their religious beliefs would abide. The problem was that in the new paradigm, truth lost its critical facility. No rule extrinsic to human rationality and experience remained. The result was that the modernist subjected the Protestant tradition and scripture to criticism based on values which were captive to early twentieth century democratic ideals. Whereas the nineteenth century Protestantism had accorded reason a place alongside Scripture, never questioning the objective authority of Scriptures, the modernists ended up subjugating revelation to reason in much the same way Jefferson did.[48]

Fraternity

Antebellum Protestantism did not see a republic merely organized around liberal values but a Christian republic. Evangelical religion was the social glue of the nation. In the providence of God, it was the destiny of Christianity and republicanism to be joined. There was of course toleration for religious differences but full membership in the democratic banquet was culturally and to some degree formally tied to evangelicalism. The reconception of truth within a framework of immanence forced the Protestant modernists to broaden their parameters of inclusivity. Religious (and ethnic) diversity was not to be feared but given its place. The most that could be said about the specialness of Christianity was that it was more historically advanced - not the sole depository of religious truth. This conclusion weakened, if not in principle eliminated, the basis needed to support the vision of a Christian republic.

Progress

As discussed, in antebellum America the idea of progress was fed by two different streams which never fully merged. On the one side, Protestantism was able to envision itself coming closer to a millennial dawn which God had promised. But it tended to conclude that this millennial dawn was near because it had come to believe that human nature could be changed and it held in its grasp the evangelical implements of change. In the wake of revival came conversion, piety, benevolence and cultural reform resulting in the transformation of society. On the republican side, the idea of progress was fed by the belief that liberty was the formal requirement for

creating a better society characterized by industry, discipline, virtue and reason. Reason working through scientific method, led to mastery over nature and a new sense of human transcendence. These two views of the future fed each other and complemented each and to some degree merged in the idea of manifest destiny. However, they remained distinct strands of thought. These distinctions evaporated when the Protestant modernists came under the influence of new-platonic and evolutionary ideas. The idea that within nature and history there existed a dynamic force, tempted Protestantism to view modern socio-political developments and their religious goals as one unfolding drama. This was one factor why the Protestant modernists thoroughly identified the religious realm with the secular realm. Another reason which has already been alluded to, was that their idea of change shifted from converting human nature to changing the social environment. This was a vocation that required the church to understand itself primarily as a social agency with moral conscience and courage.

The idea that the church possessed unique importance suffered in this development. This is reflected in the bold, if not unwitting, declaration made by a former dean of Harvard Divinity School. "The idea of the church is not and never has been the centre of our [North American] religious interest. We are more interested in the Kingdom of God in its totality."[49] This fact is more critically noted by American historians Smith, Handy, and Loetscher.

> "Protestant orthodoxy as a whole has been largely indifferent toward ecclesiology. The same must be said also of Protestant liberalism. Investigation indicates that not a single Christocentric liberal from the time of Bushnell until World War I published a major treatise on the nature of the church. Furthermore, the subject was almost entirely ignored in the two most influential works in liberal systematic theology. Leaders in the social-gospel phase of liberalism definitely feared that an emphasis upon the church would deflect attention from the kingdom of God. Rauschenbusch, for example, argues that the early Christian movement lost its prophetic character when the church replaced the kingdom of God as the object of primary interest."[50]

Writing in the context of modernity's principles, Kenneth Cauthen says:

> "Finally, the principle of continuity reduced the distance between the church and the total society. Liberals were more interested in the transformation of the whole society into the kingdom of God than in the church itself as a distinctive community of faith. The church was widely regarded in an instrumental and pragmatic sense. Its purpose was to co-operate with other social agencies in promoting the ends of justice and

brotherhood. As a result, the doctrine of the church fell into serious neglect among many liberal thinkers."[51]

Section B

Fundamentalist Evangelical Protestantism - The Religious Right and Social Fixity

In the latter decades of this century, the segment of Protestantism known as fundamentalism moved from a position of relative cultural separatism to that of an active agent for social reform. The following discussion progresses through three stages. First, the social conditions which comprise the seed bed for the rise of this phenomenon are reviewed. In principle "stabilizing" and moralizing movements are endemic to the individualistic structure and ethos of modern society. The rise of the fundamentalist driven Religious Right is an outgrowth of the individualistic structure and ethos of modernity come of age.

Second the history and conditions *within* fundamentalist evangelicalism that predicted its eventual emergence as an active social agent for moral stability and as a conserver of former cultural norms, are considered. Here a larger societal need is perceived and named (fixity: certainty, authority and stability), and a religious ecclesial source familiar with these qualities emerged to become a socially relevant agent to return these qualities to society. The third discussion analyzes the emergence of fundamentalist evangelicalism which matured into the present Religious Right. This discussion reviews the basis on which social fixity was thought to be obtained: authority and control.

The Societal Condition Necessary for the Rise of Religion as Social Fixity

The social polity and ethos of modernity created by the Founding Fathers contained within itself the seeds of an eventual sociocultural crisis. It is the arrival of this social condition or "crisis" that accounts for the rise of the Fundamentalist-driven Religious Right. The Founders were instrumental in implanting within their society a formal mechanism which could be endlessly exploited for cultural change (through a process of diversification and individualization). In addition to this, they instilled collective confidence in the values of modernity, insisting they were good for the

individual as well as society. But they did this on the basis of their "Enlightenment faith." They presumed that if society was politically reorganized to guarantee individual liberty and empowered by the new ethos, it would inevitably lead to a high level of sociocultural harmony and cohesion. Two prominent American historians of this century have rightly identified the Founding Fathers as cosmopolitans who believed in the essential compatibility of ethnic and religious differences with social harmony. America for them was not about submitting these differences to a process of syncretism but empowering a new synergism.[52] Their plan rested in part on their naive Enlightenment faith in reason and natural law harmony (later revised and influenced by Post-Enlightenment immanental idealism). It was inevitable that with the acceleration of the process of pluralization, individualization, and secularization (along with the ethos that accompanied these), common cultural stores would be depleted and a less socially and morally coherent condition would result. This accounts for the rise of groups seeking, in one way or another, to reground, reconnect, or "resacralize" society. That religious groups would become involved in this "reclamation" of society, should come as no surprise to the student of history. Religion has always been vulnerable to being co-opted into becoming a socially conservative principle.

With the coming of modernity, the nation's formal polity (declaring the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to all) would be extended beyond the narrow cultural boundaries of antebellum America. Socially speaking, nothing characterizes modernity more than this phenomenon of pushing back the existing strictures of culture to make room for greater diversity. Through recourse to political judicial leverage via the courts and constitution, what belonged to the few became potentially available to all. Liberty, rights, social status, economic and educational opportunity were in principle universalized. Proprietorial, gender, religious and other differences, to which were attached sociocultural significance, began to be challenged and relativized.

While antebellum America made some progress in this direction, it was the Civil War that ushered in modernity proper. Even though the civil war was entered upon for less noble reasons than the defense of idealistic principles, it eventually came to be interpreted as a victory for America's original charter, "all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with inalienable rights." When the evil of one race's

enslavement by another was challenged and overturned on the moral grounds of this principle, a new history of broadening the scope of America's charter commenced. In the wake of this victory, the United States would progress on a path of mini-revolutions and struggles, each of which would relativize and loosen the existing organization of culture so as to accommodate greater diversity. Blacks, women, children, workers, ethnic and religious minorities and gays would demand inclusion into a social contract, which once was culturally bound so as to only fully include the white landed Protestant male. This process made society a matrix for individuation.

The policy of individual liberty and the ethos of individualism, as Gertrude Himmelfarb pointed out, are intimately intertwined.[53] In other words, as the rights of republic citizenship became legally and culturally more inclusive, the ethical fiction of absolute individualism grew stronger. This ethos is a cultural standard of value which encourages individuals to relativize and transcend collective definitions and determinations of themselves. These may arise from marriage, family, church, nation, etc. They may exhibit features that are rooted in social history, tradition, religion or ethnic heritage. Increasingly as the individual becomes more and more absolute there is less and less shared socio-cultural values. In this condition, society loses almost all critical force. Consent versus coercion and protection of children represent the extent of its moral horizon. All social behaviour not explicitly criminal is free to claim, expect and be granted social acceptance. Dignity, right and liberty are non-dialectical.

While the justification of this process is unquestionable by the standard of modernity's ethic, the cultural optimism inherent within it is parallel to the economic optimism of laissez faire. What law exists that can guarantee that the process of empowering individuation, greater social diversity, plurality and difference will yield results compatible with sociocultural cohesion and integrity? What principle guarantees that social atomization, divisions, fragmentation and the polarization of entities will not result? Is it a simple historical possibility to underwrite the legitimacy of all difference? Is it a historical probability that the social polity and ethos of modernity, which encourages (if not guarantees) the right of all persons to individuate themselves from preexisting social definitions, will automatically end with these same individuals transcending self so as to insure sociality? With the radical relativizing of institutional authority and political, familial, and ecclesiastical conventions, what is to insure the reintegration of the individual into a harmonious

social relation? In short, what grounds ensure that the empowering of individual freedom does not end in social anarchy? Beyond merely an increased reliance on law and coercive power, what is there to guarantee society's cultural seams will not come completely unraveled? Historically, neither the Founding Fathers nor Protestant evangelicals ignored the element of social risk inherent in a policy which guaranteed individual liberty within the limits of the common good. That which allowed them to proceed with confidence on their course of reconstructing social polity so as to guarantee liberty was a set of informal presuppositions which they believed in.

Their model of society was constructed around the building up of suitable individual units: citizens. Such individuals were not directly connected in a posture of social solidarity and shared fortunes and futures. Rather, each person was individuated and was a distinct embodiment (to a greater or lesser degree) of republican virtue over vice, learning and experience over ignorance and folly, usefulness and productivity over poverty and latent untapped resourcefulness.[54]

Religion, virtue and reason were instrumental in prompting the person "upward." Individuals were connected (as it were) "vertically." The social or horizontal vision was an automatic by-product of building a certain kind of highly individuated complete "man." This social model of a collective of individual units meant that the structures and conventions that organized society were regarded with moral indifference. Converted and changed individuals would "save" society. The individual, made right by learned virtue or evangelical piety, would create a ripple effect. His or her piety, moral force and sharpened sense of compassion and justice would automatically extend itself outward.

In this context, the moral capacity of the isolated individual was exaggerated by many in the nineteenth century, including prominent churchmen. Slavery as an institution would come to an end by the sheer force of moral persuasion exerted on estate owners, quite apart from any change in the law of the land.[55]

As discussed in Section A, the vertical reference which provided society with an ordered world view, (i.e. an objective point of moral fixity) was not jettisoned but reconceived within a more organic and immanental paradigm. No one definitive, accessible design existed which harmonized humans to achieve positive ends. The "New" order, theoretically speaking, became a given. It had a life of its own. Diversity on this ground was untouchable and optimistically entertained. Reason and

experience (the grounds of Enlightenment humanism), liberated from strict conformity to external absolutes, could find their own ends and fulfillment.[56] Truth was conceived as more within oneself, within societies and within history. This meant that, in time, all historical incongruities could be viewed in the framework of a larger resolution.

In the end, neither the eighteenth-century assumptions that viewed liberty in relation to natural law-design, nor the late nineteeth-century belief in immanence, warranted the Founders' social optimism. The increased individualization and pluralization that occurred in society because of mainstreaming the promise and precedent embedded in the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights, cannot be neatly separated from the growing ethos of individualism and pluralism that pervaded culture. Both polity and ethos are intertwined and may be ultimately antithetical to social harmony, rather than conducive to it. The Founders' economic assumptions about the realization of a relatively egalitarian citizenship were in the end based merely on laissez faire fiction. In the same way, it is appropriate to conclude that the policy of individual liberty regarding the realization of socio-moral harmony would eventually be called into question in light of deteriorating social conditions.

A number of prominent thinkers in this century have recognized the social risk that modernity's liberal principles present. Writing around the turn of the century, Ernst Troeltsch pointed out that the ethos of "rationalistic individualism passed more and more into a relativism, the disruptive and divisive effects of which are only too familiar to us today. There are not wanting, of course socializing reactions against this tendency...". He went on to speak of a political economic countermovement against autonomous individualism.[57]

Reinhold Niebuhr also recognized the inherent risk in individualism: "Human freedom always produces disruptive as well as creative effects in the human community."[58] "The unity and stability of the community makes liberty even today less than an absolute right."[59] "Tragic events of recent history prove that organic and historic forms of human togetherness cannot be so easily dissolved by abstract individualism and universalism."[60] More recently, Robert Bellah has suggested that individualism stands behind the "depletion of non-renewable cultural resources."[61]

Gertrude Himmelfarb's, *On Looking into the Abyss: Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society*, also focused on this problem: "Tocqueville, writing about

America but having in mind all those countries (notably his own) that would inevitably follow America along the path of democracy, was especially alert to the dangers of excessive individuality - 'individualism' as he called it. That 'novel expression' he explained, derives from a 'novel idea': not selfishness (egoisme) in the old sense, which is passionate and exaggerated love of self, 'but a mature and calm feeling' which disposes every individual to sever himself from society. Originating from democracy and thriving on equality, individualism saps the 'virtues of public life and eventually of private life as well.'"[62]

The emergence of religion as a mechanism of social fixity is not merely to be explained as an inevitable reaction to cyclical social change, but a reaction to a linear problem that had been evolving for some time. Modernity come of age creates social problems that are rooted both in the very structure or polity which organizes society itself and the corresponding ethos that becomes culturally established. The persistence of a Protestant culture in the United States during its first century and a half, hid the underlying weaknesses of the system until that culture eroded.

Bonhoeffer recognized in his day that western culture was living off of the religious capital of its ancestors. He spoke in one context of humanity and goodness "as the unconscious residue of a former attachment to the ultimate."[63] The social consequences of individual transcendence would eventually manifest itself by extreme socio-moral pluralism. The right to challenge social norms, conventions, traditions, taboos and morals in one area contains within it a virus which in time challenges all areas.

Freedom, defined as individual autonomy and inviolability, does not possess within it an informing teleological principle. Its socio-moral compass is determined by the interests and drives germane to the self.[64] The dominance of this "ethic" demands that society accommodate the continual proliferation of individualistic and pluralistic claims, so long as no explicit injury to others is involved. The dogma of individuality within an existing Christian Protestant culture was benign, but with the passing of the culture (and the emerging maturity of the polity and ethos of individuality) a sociocultural condition inevitably arrived which spawned movements (such as the Religious Right) which aim to selectively circumscribe the political guarantee for individual liberty and seek to connect society to socio-moral "absolutes."

This logic is further evident by exploring the implications of secularization. Protestantism remained invested in American society after disestablishment. Culturally, it had become (and would continue to become) deeply entrenched in the mainstream of American life. Educational institutions, public reforms [e.g. temperance], Protestant benevolent organizations aimed at relief for the poor, children and widows, provided Protestantism with a public character and interaction.

But its public face bore more than a benevolent complexion. Protestantism had insisted that America was a Christian nation, and it insisted that the morals, values and broad beliefs of Christianity be given preference through judicial and legislative protection. In the political foundations of the country, Jefferson and Madison embedded the liberal values which required the secularization of the public domain. But these principles were only gradually implemented.[65] Regarding the secularization, not of culture, but of public life, a steady increasing alignment with the Jefferson/Madisonian principle is historically discernible, dating back to the early decades of the nineteenth century.[66] While passionately resisted by Protestantism and its leaders, as well as significant political figures, the terms of public life steadily appealed to rational rather than religious categories of truth, right, wrong and justice in areas of public accountability and commerce. This one criterion distinguishes Modernity from the nascent modernism of the antebellum period, namely, the maturation, progress and wide acceptance of the Jefferson/Madison basis of society. Secularization, seeded by the Founders, eventually took root and grew to dominance. Growing ethnic and religious pluralism in America made recourse to normative religious claims increasingly impossible. What was once culturally normative eventually came to be regarded as the particularities of one group among others.

Socioculturally speaking, the nineteenth century had commenced with a rather unified Christian-Protestant complexion around its values, beliefs and morals. But the sociocultural complexion of America in the modern period steadily became less unified. This contrast has a philosophical parallel. At the beginning of the nineteenth century society, two reference points for truth were both thought to be compatible and universal in character.[67] One was a rational (and empirical) standard, the other a revelational standard (i.e., the Christian Bible). As a normative reference for right and wrong, for basic values and for belief in God and truth, the Bible was widely regarded as socially normative. Reason and science reading nature could also arrive at the same

conclusions. The Bible, regarded as *a* source rather *the* source of truth, was at once the common source of truth. America came out of the Revolution confident in essentially two compatible sources of authority.[68]

In the nineteenth century, it was inconceivable to move society from this foundation of truth. But modernity come-of-age emerges with only one normative reference in society. Philosophically speaking, this transition is due to more than pragmatic accommodation, to the increase in social pluralism or the progress of the formal polity of the Founders. Two factors are involved: one secular, the other religious. The secular sourcing of the nation, was not merely a formal arranging of society around the liberal values of freedom and equality. Freedom contained an ideological fuse. It was grounded in an optimistic reading of human nature, which was at once in tension with puritan religio-political thought which held to a pessimistic view of human nature and required a corresponding exercise of political power to limit the socio-moral freedom of the masses.

What once existed under the authoritative purveyance and dissemination of these institutions (i.e. the morality and truth necessary to conduct one's life, *saving* it from corruption etc.) was, by Enlightenment standards, readily accessible to reason. The Enlightenment argued that through the critical power of reason and experience alone, universal eternal moral truths could be discerned and given their proper place in society, thereby making heteronomous institutions and sources redundant. Kant enthusiastically claimed that Enlightenment was the agent of the kingdom of God because it made universal through reason what had been previously caught in the grip of parochial ecclesiastical institutions.[69] In his critical study of Christianity, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793), Kant wrote,

> "We have good reason to say that 'the Kingdom of God is come unto us' once the principle of the gradual transition of ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason, and so to a (divine) ethical state on earth, has become general and has gained somewhere a public foothold, even though the actual establishment of this state is still infinitely removed from us. For since this principle contains the basis for a continual approach toward such a consummation, there lies in it (invisibly) as a seed which is self-developing and in due time self-fertilizing, the whole which one day is to illuminate and to rule the world. But truth and goodness... do not fail to communicate themselves far and wide once they have become public, thanks to their natural affinity with the moral predisposition of rational beings generally. The obstacles, arising from political and civil causes, which may from time to time hinder their spread, serve rather to make all the closer the union of men's

> spirits with the good (which never leaves their thoughts once they have cast their eyes upon it). Such, therefore, is the activity of the good principle, unnoted by human eyes but ever continuing--erecting for itself in the human race, regarded as a commonwealth under laws of virtue, a power and a kingdom which sustains the victory over evil and, under its own dominion, assures the world of an eternal peace."[70]

It was not with the church's morality that American Enlightenment elites such as Jefferson were in conflict. Rather, it was the pretension of ecclesiastical authority that they disavowed. Through reason, these could be given a simple historical social existence. Unwittingly, Protestantism in America entered into the new republican arrangement in good faith, thinking that while the ecclesiastical universalism of church as an institution over society was past, a functional universalism guided by the minimal contents of their faith and practice would remain in place. It was inconceivable that their truths and values would not be given their proper universal dignity, grounded as they were in revelation and convinced as they were that reason was not in fundamental conflict with revelation.

Enlightenment idealism, insofar as it was infused into the social reorganization of the nation, was *in principle* never benign regarding the church or its religion. *In principle* it wanted to provide for the social privatization of religion (as a right under its commitment to individual sovereignty) and the social endorsement of reason (as universally reliable and the only proper coinage of public commerce).[71] Protestantism resisted this privatization by deepening its claim to the public character of its knowledge. But in the end this claim could not be sustained under the increasing dominance of the terms of modernity. It is, however, the character and predicament of modernity that is important to recognize. Modernity's problems are two fold. First, the privatization of religion contributes to the contemporary condition of a shrinking or diminishing common cultural texture. In the widely read study, *The Culture of Disbelief*, Stephen Carter claimed that religion as a reference for social public intercourse and interaction had gone by the wayside.[72] All appeals to ecclesiastical and religious rationale were relegated to the precincts of one's private group. Not only was there no common religio-moral language, but there was also an absence of respect for those appealing to their own religious reference to authority within a public setting.

Second, contemporary society is living after the disappointment of the collapse

of universalism. In the modern period, individuals and groups claiming their own sanctions and warrants have increasingly emerged, creating a competitive, polarized, and compartmentalized society. In short, Kant's optimism about the simple historical realization of eternal values and morals via individual reason is not historically verified. Within a social polity that sanctions individual rights and differences, reason does not create what ecclesial-political power supplied: cohesion or unity and a common moral language. That is to say, rationality is servant to particular interests, not fundamentally a "higher" faculty which naturally enables a person to transcend himself and access universal order and interests. The secularization of society, created by the universalization of reason and the privatization of religion, led to a crisis.

Modernity is defined by the coincidence of both of these phenomena, creating what may be descriptively identified as cultural erosion, the exhaustion and depletion of those historic religio-cultural resources that provide cohesion and stability to the social body.[73] Little or no *common* criteria remain to adjudicate social boundaries (right from wrong, better from worse, self interest versus community interest). It is the presence of this condition that explains the rise of "top-down" stabilizing strategies, whether economic, social or religious.[74]

Himmelfarb, quoting Nietzsche, summarizes the problem with which modernity finds itself saddled:

> Nietzsche, who took nothing for granted, least of all the virtues of self control, self-restraint, and self-discipline, had contempt for those English moralists - that "flathead" Mill, as he called him and that "little moralistic female" George Eliot - who thought they could secularize morality by divorcing it from Christianity. Beneath their "insipid and cowardly concept 'man' " lingers the old "cult of Christian morality." What these "moral fanatics" do not realize is how conditional their morality is on the religion they profess to discard. And it is only because of the persistence of that religion that, for the English, "morality is not yet a problem."[75]

The phenomenon of the rise of a Protestant-led Religious Right from the background of this analysis, and in light of Protestantism's history, is clearly more than a mere collision of different values (which, of course it is). It is more than a Right - Left polemic. And it deserves a more dispassionate analysis. While truly lacking as a constructive socially viable response, the concerted action of right-wing religion grows out of a sociocultural condition that is rapidly losing cultural integrity.

It is the existence of this condition which prompted the Right in America to take the "high" ground and present a united front to save America and save society.

Stepping forward in this messianic spirit, rather than merely polarizing over key issues, was not out of character with Protestantism's past relation to America during both antebellum and colonial periods. Neither this messianic relation to society nor the Religious Right's "plan of salvation" which was to connect society en masse to religio-moral absolutes, was in principle unique. What is relatively distinctive is that for the first time this occurred in a setting in which society is consistently organized around Enlightenment liberal values. The Enlightenment social experiment has had time to fully mature, so that its effect on society's cultural moral cohesion is much more clearly recognized. There is nothing in the Enlightenment premises which prevents a condition of individualistic socio-moral relativism. Over against grounding moral choices in the individual [even the "rational" individual], the Right suddenly came to the forefront claiming that there exists a clear moral reference outside of the individual.

To the surprise of many in the late 1970's, fundamentalist Protestantism emerged out of its social insularity, joined hands with other religious groups, and commenced to wage an all-out cultural war to save the nation, insisting that America return to its former religio-moral foundations. Over against the breakdown of a cultural-moral consensus it asserted a gospel of moral absolutism derived from natural, transcendent (i.e. religious) and historical (traditional) referents. Further, it engaged the Republican party in an effort to harness the democratic process for socio-moral reform. In this, it selectively attacked not only the ethos but the polity which allowed for the individualization, pluralization and secularization of society.

The Right attributed special significance to particular social changes. They contended that certain changes not only reflected but caused America's social collapse. In the early 1960's, prayer (that is, public prayers) and Bible readings in public schools were finally prohibited.[76] In taking these steps, the courts were not moving ahead of cultural change, but in the wake of it. America had changed, becoming religiously plural and culturally more secular. In time Fundamentalists would seize upon this step, finalized by the Supreme Court, as the signal that America had slipped off its Judeo-Christian foundation and become fully secularized. They would also link this "secularism" in the public schools to the breakdown of morals in

the youth as contributing, if not causing, a train of social ills.[77] It is almost impossible to estimate the extent that these decisions would be exploited as the irrefutable evidence of a secularistic takeover.

In 1973, the Rowe v Wade Supreme Court decision paved the way for the legalization of abortion, upholding a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy. During the 1970's divorce increased 67%, and families headed by unwed mothers rose 356%. In 1979, 17% of all white children and 55% of all black children were born out of wedlock. In the wake of the late sixties and throughout the 1970's, the use of drugs, pornography, and teen pregnancy rose sharply, with a corresponding rise in dependence on the welfare state. In this same period, feminism became a social force and homosexuals began to assert their place within society. The former director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, James E. Wood, Jr., made the following statement concluding his analysis about the sudden rise of the Religious Right in the late 1970's:

> "The reasons behind the emergence of (religious) fundamentalist political movements are not difficult to understand. Many ills attend American society... The social revolution of recent decades has resulted in placing a severe strain on moral and religious values and in posing severe threats to family life throughout the nation. The eroding patterns of authority and the growing permissiveness of an increasingly pluralistic society have had a frightening effect on millions of Americans. Understandably, there is a nativist longing for the certainties of the past that the new right readily seeks to fill...The political arm of fundamentalism sees itself as offering the moral and political answers to the nation's ills as furnishing a virtual blueprint for the reordering of American society."[78]

The Rise of Religion as Social Fixity

In the 1970's, Protestant fundamentalism moved from a separatistic posture (in its relations to mainstream America and the cultural course of the nation) to a posture of political militancy in an effort to reassert a measure of social *control*. The sudden shift of late twentieth century Protestant fundamentalism from cultural insularity and a solely individualistic soteriological focus to one of sociopolitical engagement can only be properly understood in light of past transitions.

In the nineteenth century, sectarian divisiveness was, in part, tamed by evangelical revivalism and the strengthening of what Protestantism held in common. This was paralleled by the cultural establishment of Protestantism versus the political

establishment of particular churches of the previous era. But despite being the "first" religion of the republic and achieving a significant level of cultural homogeneity, uneasy tensions persisted. A measure of control over the identity of the republic and its values was part of the nineteenth century Protestant mind-set. That this impulse did not become more volatile in the nineteenth century is likely due to the fact that Protestantism had fully domesticated its world and kept it familiar.

The exercise of formal control over society, as well as the exercise of influence over society (culturation), were both live Protestant evangelical "strategies" in the nineteenth century, with control progressively giving place to the dominance of the latter. It is, however, another question whether the premises that supported a posture of control disappeared. What is clearly evident is that influence was working. By the close of the antebellum period, Protestantism held undisputed cultural dominance. It had lent enormous persuasive power to the abolitionist cause, as well as the temperance campaigns.

Even so, Protestantism's cultural dominance was partly an illusion. The new world had been penetrated by the modernistic premises sown by the Jefferson and Madison school. Positivistic seeds were in the soil of the new nation to which Protestantism was culturally wedded. Society was inexorably moving in the direction of a more consistent incarnation of secular premises. It was almost inevitable that, in time, Protestantism would itself be rent by this development, one part staying with culture and modernity, another part becoming more separatist, both toward the modern sociocultural world as it matured and toward the mainstream of Protestantism that remained invested in that world. It is also true that the estrangement that occurred eventually increased, taking on a life of its own, polarizing around doctrinal issues, chiefly around the question of biblical authority.

Because modernity had epistemologically challenged moral and biblical absoluteness, fundamentalism defended itself by pushing beyond its normative confession of the trustworthiness of scripture. Out of this controversy, a divided Protestantism emerged. One part, freed from its internal opposition, and emboldened by its apparent victory, moved deeper into modernistic premises and culture. The other part gradually moved away from the modern world. New denominations, seminaries, colleges and printing houses were created in the wake of an exodus from mainline churches and institutions, who were viewed as infected with modernism.

The spirit and confession (i.e. piety) of the new churches were openly shaped in antagonism to cultural standards. In essence, Protestantism had identified, not just a single issue enemy, but an entire world direction. Mission was understood in strictly individualistic terms. Social agency and activism were not important, as such. Conservative evangelical theology strengthened Protestantism's historic appeal to scripture by claiming that the entire scope of scripture was inerrant and all that it said was infallible. In addition, this evangelicalism became consistently pre-millennial.[79]

Separatism is often a covert form of aggression. It signals loss of control and an intensifying of hostility and alienation with its world. In fundamentalism's case, this was an alienation from a world that had previously submitted to its cultural and religious values. Unable to remain domesticated by Protestantism, the "New World" completed its emancipation. It was inevitable, in hindsight, that part of Protestantism would take up a counter-cultural position. Here piety is not merely a statement of one's understanding of Christian discipleship. Rather, it represented the location of the individual in her relation to the world. It is in part a world-denying statement, born out of a collision with an eroding cultural ethos. Fundamentalist Protestantism's turn toward a posture of sociocultural separatism signifies the failure of its efforts to control its world and represents an unresolved tension with its world. This is the background necessary for understanding the renaissance of religion reshaped in the form of social fixity.

Fundamentalist Evangelical Protestantism -- The Religious Right and Social Fixity: The Cultural Mainstreaming of Authority and Control

Before 1978, there were some concentrated attempts to socially activate fundamentalists' latent antagonism toward modernity, but these did not materialize.[80] Where others failed, Reverend Jerry Falwell, fundamentalist preacher and tele-evangelist, would succeed and inaugurate a new social engagement for religion. The broad outlines of this history are generally well known.

Falwell formed the Moral Majority to polemicize the modern social trends and gather a base of support to reverse the "breakdown of traditional values." Other tele-evangelists from similar right-wing evangelical backgrounds joined in. Soon, a well-funded, broad-based religious movement began to coalesce around sharply-defined positions. Alliances with cultural and political conservatives were

formed. Para-church organizations for every conceivable socially conservative cause sprang up and proliferated, on local, state and national levels. Major coalitions were built with sophisticated networking skills, so that elections (from the presidential race to the seats on local school boards) were swung: Issues once thought secure by law were mired in judicial and legislative battles.

What began under the dynamism and authoritarianism of the evangelical right, spread beyond Protestantism to Catholic and Jewish circles, creating a religious rather than a strictly Protestant or Christian right. The movement is now over two decades old and shows no signs of abating. It has grown through experience and adversity and is now admittedly less strident and openly crude in its rhetoric. While no less religious and theistic, it is now working through fine-tuned para-church agencies that are cross-connected with their wider counterpart ecclesial and political constituencies.

The explanation for fundamentalist Protestantism's sudden emergence from cultural insularity to militant social action lies in the discovery of a mutual point of contact. On the one hand, the historical trajectory of the experiment of society, organized around liberal values, had come to maturity. The acceleration of a process of individualization, secularization and pluralization was resulting in the "depletion of cultural stores." By formalizing individual liberty into social polity, and by the cultural establishment of an ethos of individualism, a condition characterized by increased particularism had progressively come to define society, creating a less stable situation (characterized by increased individual autonomy and greater moral diversity and relativity).

On the other hand, a culturally parochialized Protestantism looked out at this peculiar social condition, eventually to recognize within itself at least two characteristics that it would come to regard as relevant: (1) the absolutizing of its religio-moral standards and (2) the extension of the minimal content of these standards beyond the parameters of its ecclesial life for larger social-national purposes.

In the latter of these, fundamentalism was reengaging that part of Protestantism's past which had manifested itself in colonial and antebellum times, that is, with one exception. In the colonial and antebellum periods, modernity was in the process of being born. For fundamentalist Protestantism to regain a measure of religio-moral control over the nation in the late twentieth century would require a new

direct collision with modernity's social premises and a new kind of political involvement.

That the new Religious Right was inaugurated by fundamentalist evangelicals was not an accident. Fundamentalism discovered within itself that which society appeared to lack and need. It was the most coherent, self-conscious religious depository of those qualities of certainty, fixity, stability, authority and unity, missing in contemporary society. Furthermore, there is no evidence that this branch of Protestantism ever reconciled itself with relinquishing the hope of an ongoing *formal* connection between the nation and *its* values and beliefs. Its emergence from reclusivity to social relevance would require two new employments of its religion: authority and control. This involved a partial transformation or abstraction of itself and its religion.

In the fundamentalist mind, socio-moral cohesion, i.e., "fixity," is ultimately dependant on society's connection to a set of moral absolutes. It is this absolute given (i.e., eternal) character of moral truth that ensures society will not succumb to moral erosion and change. For this reason, forging this connection and establishing the absolute character of morality are both crucial to fundamentalism. If society is not tied to a well defined moral anchor, it will drift and shipwreck in a sea of moral confusion. In principle, this theory shares much with New England Puritanism, the elitism of eighteenth century republicanism and nineteenth century attempts to force a Christian republic. There is implied in this idea a sense that nations can escape the aging process; that they can endure as if exempt from the corrosive effects of the historical process because of a connection with that which is eternal. Of course, this is all dependent upon the presupposition that the absolute moral truth is simply and unambiguously accessible in time.

Authority

What existed within a sharply defined parochial setting, required transpositioning to a "universal" secular social setting. Authoritarianism and absolutism may have functioned relatively well within the social microcosm of fundamentalism, but could it also be made to so function within a macrocosm (society)? Could it be easily transmuted to that plane? Fundamentalist, absolutistic tendencies in part derived their strength from "negative energy," that is to say, their

tension with modernity's ills and exploits, manifested in society and in liberal-moderate Protestantism. Furthermore, fundamentalism's experience with a high degree of social stability and rigidity transpired within relatively small, closed ecclesial social units. Even so, eventually a national network of self-help groups for recovering fundamentalists sprang up.

The movement of religious authority from a parochial to a wider social setting took place, analytically speaking, out of the mutual attraction of opposites. A social condition was forming, defined by the absence of moral consensus (or the cultural breakdown of such a consensus corresponding to a greater display of idiosyncratic individualism). It is in this vacuum that the question arose: If society is not to find its socio-moral order and norms from within its cultural format, from where shall it derive them?

Fundamentalist social "relevance" arrives with this question. Its sources of authority are "needed." Of course, this is an effort to disclose the underlying logic of this phenomenon. What is readily evident is that fundamentalism exploited its authoritarian sources in the historical moment by judging a wide gamut of social changes and weighing them in the balances. The authority with which they were familiar was brought into the mainstream of society. The certainty, lack of ambiguity, black/white, right/wrong ethic they brought was met by many within society as a refreshing victory over the "anaemic" morality of the times.[81]

This predilection for adjudicating social issues in black-white relief may in part be challenged as anachronistic. The social structures necessary for an absolutist approach, if they ever existed, had largely disappeared.[82] Many of the issues, broadly speaking, have been and continue to be gathered under the rubric "family,"[83] a term that became highly politicized and used in umbrella fashion. "Family" became a euphemism for right-wing ideology.

Over time, the Religious Right would exploit three sources, with the intention to resupply society's apparent critical-authority deficit: The *transcendent*, i.e. religious sources (in this case biblical revelation); *nature*, the natural ordering of creation; and *history* or tradition.

Fundamentalism had previously fought a war to salvage biblical authority against the attacks of modernism. They were equipped with a dogma of a plenary infallible, inerrant Bible and with a rather simple direct approach to understand and

apply its instruction.[84] This battle forced them to reach for respectable and sophisticated rational arguments so as to fend off the steady advance of historical criticism. If scripture was to escape the relativization of its authority, the ground of that authority had to be made secure.

Before the turn of the century in America, Princeton and Charles Hodge Sr. (followed by his son and Benjamin Warfield) took up the task of safeguarding and strengthening the authority of scripture. Later, Cornelius Van Til and Carl Henry, among others, carried on serious theological efforts to defend the authority of scripture. In the seventies, a host of lesser lights, more fundamentalist than theological, such as Hal Lindsey, a former editor of *Christianity Today* and popular author, took up the task. Scriptural inerrancy, they argued, if compromised in the least, would cause the entire religio-moral foundation of human life to come unraveled. It is the rational grounds of this authority that is insisted upon, without which the claim of universality versus mere "special pleading" or parochiality rests. It is this logical-rational basis, theoretically speaking, that legitimizes the claim that society's norms ultimately must be informed by biblical standards. In other words, arguing for the authority of scripture, disqualifies scriptural norms from functioning as socially normative. Rationality, so-called, pretends to prove the Bible's authority. As such, it attempts to establish the Bible's religio-moral positions on a basis which the world must respect and give credence. In this way, the Bible is made to function for making authoritative statements about social choices, directions, positions. In short, reason is employed to prove the absoluteness of fundamentalism's Biblical authority. Thus, society can regain its moral stability.[85]

Protestant fundamentalists, who postulated a simple authoritative application of biblical instruction to the particulars of individual and public life, soon realized they had friends where they least expected. Those whom they once anathematized were being reapproached as allies.[86] Fundamentalist evangelicals found that conservative Roman Catholics were appealing to natural law in the same way that they were appealing to scripture.[87] Within the Catholic tradition, Natural law had always been a way of fusing this world's social order to (the fixed) created ordinances, a way of introducing the eternal into the flux of time.

History is the third area to which the Religious Right turned in an effort to reconnect society to religious moorings. The propensity to invest pivotal junctures of

the past with ongoing authority is, of course, inevitable. Eventually, the Religious Right returned to the nineteenth century claim that America was a Christian nation, formally constituted on Judeo-Christian principles and morals. In time, this claim came under fire, which served to deepen the position of some. Others ostensibly moderated their position.[88]

Control

Contemporary Protestant fundamentalism and its metamorphosis, the Religious Right, attempted to reformalize America's connection to the religio-moral values once esteemed. In a previous era, Protestantism promoted a social platform with minimalistic controls. Later it enhanced its posture of influence, relaxing its formal claims to control the religio-moral boundaries of society. The recent eruption of the Fundamentalist Religious Right represents a return to the strategy of control, but of course, times had changed.

In the early period of the republic, Jeffersonian-Madison principles were just beginning to be grasped and implemented. The nation traveled a long way before the radicality and relative consistency of their premises would achieve mature political incarnation. In other words, the Protestant efforts to effect a measure of control, first in the early nineteenth century, and second late in the twentieth century, faced different odds. The early period was more vulnerable to a Protestant insistence for understanding liberty linked to particular religious moral norms, because their early place and role in America's development and radical Enlightenment basis of liberty was not fully formed. Furthermore, pluralism in America was far less pronounced.

In the late twentieth century however, reconnecting society at large to a particular reading of socio-moral norms was much more difficult. Secular maturity and religious and moral plurality defined the time. When Protestantism returned to its mission of ensuring that the nation would "regain" its socio-moral coherence, inevitably it had to revisit political power. But at the end of the twentieth century, accessing such power required more subtle, less overt and more democratic means.

When fundamentalist Reverend Jerry Falwell used his television program, the Old Time gospel Hour, to build the Moral Majority, essentially what he did was combine an evangelical form with a national-social cause. The evangelical heritage has its own distinctive form, which corresponds to its traditional content. The form,

as it has been practiced in America, is not known as being primarily didactical, prophetic, mystical or sage. Rather, it is declaratory, "factual," confrontational, decisive and personal.

This evangelical form, in the hands of gifted and charismatic-spirited men (and occasionally women), has had no rival from other public religious mediums. It has always galvanized human response and commitment in America, as its form fosters and ensures its social edge. What evangelical fundamentalist Protestantism did in part, was to abstract this powerful form and marry it to a sociocultural agenda under the imperative of a degenerating national condition. The evangelical modalities of urgency, decisiveness, destiny, commitment (backed by biblical authority), all evangelical modalities were enlisted in the reclamation of American society. Religious power was effectively released from its spiritual context and remarried to a national mission. Combined with the prowess of clever men, the technology of radio and television and preexistence of social conditions, a movement was born overnight. In the first stage, 1979-1989, three or four major tele-evangelists joined in a campaign to save America from socio-moral ruin. They called on fundamentalist-conservative evangelical constituencies to abandon an exclusively pietistic ethic for one of social action. By rallying followers to channel their latent antagonism to modernity into proper patriotic regard, these ministries generated a large financial and influence base. In their peak years, the early- to mid- 1980's, the combined gifted annual revenues of a handful of TV ministries may have been close to a half billion dollars.[89] The sheer size of the dollar and people support, provided the basis for a new employment of influence.

This analysis points to the methodological genius of the Protestant Right (eventually to become the Religious Right). Evangelicalism, a powerful religious form, was linked to a "new" dogma of religio-moral absolutes derived from the infallible authority of scripture and married to a patriotic cause - saving the nation from social-moral ruin. It was this combination that laid the foundation for generating an enormous influence base. This influence became their chief social implement.

The sociocultural conditions that are the mature result of the Founding Fathers' organizing principles, stimulate "top-down" strategies. Control necessitated accessing power, but direct or blatant political power within the democratic system has been checked. That is to say, political power is not readily accessible, since it must be

channeled through an electoral-representative grid and it is dispersed in several governmental branches at various levels. Furthermore, it is bound, even in its democratic form, by the dogma of the inviolability of the individual (having to do with inalienable right and liberty). Essentially, what the new Religious Right proceeded to do was reforge their influence base into a democratic implement for political control. In a democratic system, influence is the primary dynamic for directing power, and for that reason, it is the most valuable commodity.[90]

Furthermore, as Madison reasoned, the success and health of the democratic system is commensurate to the wide distribution versus the concentration of democratic leverage in any one group.[91] Generally speaking, the Religious Right did two things with their collective weight of influence. First, they sometimes put extreme pressure, on all levels of the representative system, in order to secure alignment to their positions.[92] And second, they called for the loosening of those mechanisms that limit democratic power, relativizing the formal ground which supported individualism, pluralism and a secular public space.

Regarding the Religious Right's interest in effecting change in society through accessing power in the electoral and representative system, several strategies stand out. First, they formed alliances with the political right. High-level contacts between the political right, the Republican Party and the religious right increasingly began to occur. A quasi-fusion between the political and religious right began to form.[93]

According to James Reichly (of the Brookings Institute), an exchange occurred. Whereas the Republican platform had traditionally consisted of military, economic and foreign policy issues, it broadened to become a forum for conservative moral issues.[94] This occurred under the increasing influence of the Religious Right, who could promise large numbers of votes and were willing to embrace and moralize the traditional GOP [Government Of The People, i.e., the Republican Party] platform. Here the churches' religious weight was fused, not to an issue, but to a political party and its agenda. Because of this, the Right often found its absolutism mired in a moral quagmire in the midst of conflicting inner-struggles, with very ambiguous results. In addition, it targeted elected officials, setting up a sophisticated scoring criteria based solely on a narrow range of moral and political issues. As a result, some officials received high scores and right-wing religious backing while involved in unlawful financial and sexual conduct. The new Religious Right found themselves blessing

some of the worst rascals in Washington and cursing some of the best defendants of social justice.[95]

In the first decade, 1979 to 1989, Protestant fundamentalists controlled the new religious movement. Harnessing the antagonism of their religious constituencies, they aimed primarily at the federal political level. In the second phase, after the failed attempt of Pat Robertson to capture the GOP nomination for president, the movement regrouped and formed the Christian Coalition and organized a bottom-up takeover, starting with towns and school boards.

A second use of influence reveals the dynamic of control. This is the attempt to circumscribe individual and minority privilege in an effort to compromise the pluralization and secularization of society. Theoretically speaking, it was inevitable that the individual principle would come under attack with the acceleration of cultural difference. What the Religious Right did and continues to do is put pressure on the socio-moral sphere of the individual principle by exploiting the democratic principle. It assumed that its pietistic and individualistic understanding of Judeo-Christian values was normative.

And it assumed that this understanding was always espoused (if they were true Americans), by those representative constituents that clearly grasped what America was about. Since America is a Christian nation, founded on Judeo-Christian values, and is called to be a vanguard of the true cause and use of freedom and liberty in the world, socio-moral idiosyncrasies must be brought under normative democratic rule. In this claim, the priority in the dialectic between the individual and the collective-social is moved to the collective.

The direction of the Founding Fathers, especially Jefferson and Madison and their coterie, was to abridge political power (political power organized democratically). Furthermore, the wheel that turned every other wheel in their polity was the idea that the individual was inviolable. It is likely that most of the mainstream of evangelical America (during that formative period and shortly afterward) was never fully converted to this principle.

Isaac Backus was one among other representative figures in this regard (cf. Chapter 3). He certainly valued freedom, but for different reasons than the Enlightenment elites who were the nation's formative architects. From his *Puritan* Baptist background, he approached the new America with reservations about the

intrinsic capacity of the individual to use liberty properly. In this tradition, which represents one major strand that informed American consciousness, human nature was regarded as safe for society only when integrated into a greater relation to the invisible God. The awareness of this historical difference, viewed in light of the recent emergence of cultural conditions which stressed the boundaries of the democratic principle, sheds light on the eruption of a militant Religious Right less respectful of the Founders' sensibilities.

In the larger view, America's nativity was shaped by two forms of pessimism, one of individual human nature, the other of collective power. The former finds its historical antecedent primarily in Reformed beginnings. The latter derives from a secular sourcing, i.e. the American translation of the Enlightenment premises against Parliament. A logical tension between these two, contains the potential for the emergence of an eventual cultural division.

In their efforts toward social control, the Religious Right launched a political campaign to subvert the formal basis, which has allowed the individualization, pluralization and secularization of society. These three developments stand and fall together as each involves and includes the other. Key rights issues, such as gay and lesbian rights, the right of a woman to terminate her pregnancy, free speech rights involving the arts media and the publishing and selling of pornography, religious rights displacing official prayers in public school, and a host of subsidiary issues involving civil rights/Bill of Rights claims (including many that come and go on account of the changing venue of legislative and judicial activities) derive their formal strength from the liberal polity of America and a growing cultural ethos that sanctions the presence of socio-moral difference.

Instead of merely enlisting influence to counter this expansion, the Religious Right has attempted to access means of control in order to formally subvert it. This betrays their anxiety, militancy and expediency manifested in their alliances). It has not only built and used a voting base to oppose legislation, but also called for the circumscription of the individual principle in hopes of reviving a righteous "orthodox" (middle-class family) democratic majority rule. For instance, where public school official prayers offend Jews, Muslims, atheists and others, they openly argue that the individual principle must be sacrificed for a majority good. Where the rights of individual citizens are at stake in pro-choice, it is not the rights of "potential citizens"

that are really at issue, but the precedence of a "moral" majority that is at issue.[96] In efforts to control freedom of speech, a community moral good is always the basis of argument. Again and again, the religio-political right exploits the inherent tension between these two, not only against the individual but for the presumed moral good of society at large.

Near equal to the abortion debate has been the debate over the first two clauses of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. The Religious Right believes that the root of all American evils in principle is linked to a liberal interpretation and application of this amendment. Claiming the present policy as hyper-separationism (i.e. separation of Church and State), they insist that if only this policy could be relaxed, God could be reintroduced into the public square and the civil-social healing effect would be substantial. One of the more intellectually astute of the religio-political right has summarized the issue as follows:

> "What may finally be at stake are matters far beyond those a judge is permitted to contemplate in reaching a decision. The case for the absolute separation of religion and government is well known. It is that when religion and government merge, the individual is less free both in his faith and in his politics. Jefferson said that 'religion is a matter which lies solely between a man and his God' and he approved what he called 'a wall of separation between Church and State.' That is the individualistic view, but there is a communitarian view.
>
> "There may be in man an ineradicable longing for the transcendent. If religion is officially removed from public celebration, other transcendent principles, some of them very ugly indeed, may replace them. Neuhaus makes the point by paraphrasing Spinoza, 'transcendence abhors a vacuum.' The public square will not remain naked. If religion departs, some other principle will arrive. The way is prepared by the loss of democratic legitimacy. Again Neuhaus: 'This is the cultural crisis--and therefore the political and legal crisis--of our society."[97]

Whether the Religious Right itself is merely a passing phenomenon only history will reveal. What is predictable, in light of the nature of modernity, is that "top-down" strategies will likely continue to occur, stimulated by the anxiety of less coherent and less stable social conditions. Judicial, political and religious institutions (as well as historical and philosophical disciplines) are under pressure to function and provide more socially authoritative precedents.

The reshaping of Protestant religion in a more absolutistic, authoritarian and

moralistic direction (and the extension of its values for social emergency) represents a distortion of Protestantism's historic biblical and evangelical character and calling. This segment of the church has failed to remain properly differentiated from the pessimistic forces at work in the larger sociocultural world around it. It is Protestantism's differentiation, properly understood, that comprises its true social relevance. Furthermore, its reaching for political leverage, while marginally ethical by existing political standards, discloses the extent to which it has lost its own power of prophetic-Christian witness and has taken up a strategy of forming alliances to access political power.

The explicit attempt to define America as Christian or Judeo-Christian, to make "saving" the nation its goal, to formally circumscribe individual freedom, and to "save" the family, unmasks the depth of its confusion. It has exchanged faithfulness to Christ for social relevance, a confessional word for an "authoritative" moralistic word, witness and the power of the spirit for gains in electoral, judicial, and legislative advantage, saving the new social order of modernity. The influence that Christians gain among a few in their attempt to be socially relevant must be weighed against the widespread resentment they create by their political levering.

The modern attempt to tie society to so-called religio-moral absolutes is similar to pre-modern periods in which Christianity and society were co-extensive. It is similar but not the same. The political terms of modern society forbid such an effort. Disestablishment based on the First Amendment of the Constitution altered forever the possibility that American society could be functionally linked with a given religious establishment. This has not however destroyed the propensity to formally link "essential" religious values and society. Quite the opposite is true. The organization of the modern state on liberal values exacerbates this propensity. More than in previous times, there is now perhaps an even greater temptation to attempt to connect society to a foundation both transcendent and absolute, thereby saving it from a relativistic abyss or a constant state of flux and change. This effort, of course, need not be distinctively Christian, but simply religio-moral, answerable to a broad range of traditions and belief systems rooted in an authoritarian ethic.

"Interfaith" pluralism holds in common the conviction that an eternal form or design precedes and informs socio-moral patterns and these are indispensable to government of the mundane world. The existence of these certainties are seen to be

verifiable and accessible, even though the means for their accessibility to the world differ among these traditions. Whether derived from the Bible-tradition, the church or nature-natural law in "conversation" (i.e. the social dialectic, in which reason concludes truth) or other sources, there is a unified moral reference. The first step the church takes toward social fixity arises from a misunderstanding of how the word of God supplies moral guidance to humans and their social existence. The belief that within the word of God there are simple and rationally verifiable moral absolutes that can be abstracted and mainstreamed into society, inevitably draws the church into a "new" soteriological mission - the saving of modern society.

Endnotes

1. See, for instance, Cauthen's discussion on the "formative factors in American liberalism." He speaks of "the importance of revivalism in preparing the way for liberal modes of thought...". Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962; repr., Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1983). Compare this with R. Ruether who acknowledges that the starting point for the social gospel was revivalism and the doctrine of personal conversion. Ruether, Rosemary, *The Radical Kingdom, The Western Experience of Messianic Hope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1970). 81.

2. Winthrop S. Hudson, *American Protestantism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 97.

3. Ibid., 97. See also 110, 111 & 125.

4. George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.

5. Winthrop S. Hudson, *American Protestantism*, 131, 132.

6. Ibid., 109.

7. Ibid., 134.

8. Ibid., 135.

9. Ibid.

10. Economic realities at the turn of this century challenged the veracity of the Founders' vision requiring something more of modernity. The policy of laissez faire compounded wealth. Ironically, rather than describing the progression of society toward greater harmony and equality among citizens, individual liberty, guaranteed the least possible intervention, thereby protecting existing concentrations of economic privilege.

What appeared to be a blueprint for the realization of sublime harmonies (within an agrarian setting), became an implement which effected extreme social disparities (within an

industrial setting). With the industrial age came severe poverty, soaring unemployment, the exploitation of labor by capital, a boom and bust economy, urbanism (with a corresponding increase in health and criminal problems), all of which fed off of the naive promise of laissez faire. The agreement among citizens who were exclusively land owners in some areas of the country as late as the 1830's, of a non-intervention policy that served to preserve of existing interests. The irony here is that America's policy of laissez faire grew out of Colonists critique of British power. Against the authority of a venerated political institution, they appealed to a higher control to which it could not, in principle, be subverted or contravened. By canonizing that artifice, the stage was set for the cultural baptism of socioeconomic disparity, exploited to break England's power.

The economic means which the Founders believed underwrote the realization of their vision, were eroding. For the most part, these means were created through the relatively simple accessible market, where labor and minimal skills were acquired without extra ordinary privilege, and where one's labor and skills could be gainfully sold, thereby securing one's own wealth and prosperity. As the nineteenth century progressed, these tangible means steadily deteriorated under the increasing dominance of a technology-driven industrial capitalism, creating an intransigent labor class. In order for the dream to be salvaged, society's commitment to laissez faire had to be relativized. It was therefore necessary to use political and collective power to achieve what did not arise naturally. The shift highlights the character of modernity come-of-age (i.e. the shift away from strict adherence to laissez faire grounded in the presupposition of natural law and harmony toward the use of collective and political power).

> "The context of this new period of social Christianity was the dislocation of American society created by rapid industrialization. Between 1860 and 1890 the national wealth increased 600 percent, but over half of this wealth was held by .03 percent of the population. The national picture was one of extremes of wealth and poverty: on the one hand, the vast percentage of the working masses were held at minimal exploitative wages without any of the social security benefits that the modern union worker takes for granted. On the other hand, fabulous wealth was held in the hands of a few great families founded by the captains of industry who directed this great period of expansion.
>
> America changed from a rural to an urban nation, and the beginnings of the modern megalopolis began to form. The more affluent began their exodus from the center cities, leaving the urban core to squalid slum housing." Ruether, Rosemary, *The Radical Kingdom: The Western Experience of Messianic Hope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1970).

11. Protestant thinkers and leaders in the social gospel movement (like Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, Benjamin Fay Mills) found their counterpart in secular voices such as Henry Georges *Progress and Poverty*, Henry Lloyd's *Wealth Against Commonwealth*, Jacob Rii's *How the Other Half Lives*, Lincoln Steffen's *Shame and the Cities*, and E. A. Ross's *Sin and Society*. The Christian socialist D. F. Maurice influenced Episcopalians, as the seminal work of Horace Bushnell prepared more liberal congregationalist for an appreciation of the social gospel.

12. Henry Steele Commanger, "The Significance of Freedom of Religion in American History", in *Freedom of Religion in America: Historical Roots, Philosophical Concepts and Contemporary Problems*, Henry B. Clark II, ed., (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1982) 27

13. Ken Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, 94

14. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, p. 338-339

15. See Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, *A Nation So Conceived: Reflections on the History of America from Its Early Visions to Its Present Power* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 24-29, 48-50.

16. Ruether, Rosemary, *The Radical Kingdom*, The Western Experience of Messianic Hope, 83. See Also William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), chap. 5,6.

17. Ruether, Rosemary, *The Radical Kingdom, The Western Experience of Messianic Hope*, 85.

18. In Calvin's paradigm, the state received ultimate meaning and purpose from its identity as an institutional servant of the sovereign God. This notion persisted into the nineteenth century, eventually merging with a new nationalism. But in the twentieth century, the state/society is shifted away from an explicit correlation to God and more toward a self-understanding that suffered from no explicitly self-defined linkage to religion and God. There exists no official philosophy that states that nation-states exist for any purpose other than that which humans give it. See H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., *Bioethics and Secular Humanism*, (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1971), 5.

19. For a detailed discussion of the development of the immanental side of evangelicalism during the nineteenth century, see William G. McLoughlin, Jr., ed., *The American Evangelicals 1800-1900, An Anthology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 1-27.

20. Bellah summarizes what is generally recognized to be true of American religion: "... there developed in the eighteenth century the idea that religion should be separate from the state altogether, being a matter of individual conscience. Thus emerged the idea of religion as something separate from others and rooted in the experience and conscience of individuals..." Robert Bellah, "How to Understand the Church in an Individualist Society," chap. in *Christianity and Civil Society: Theological Education for Public Life*, Boston Theological Institute, vol. 4, Rodney L. Petersen, ed., (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books; Cambridge: Boston Theological Institute, 1995), 3.

21. The social consequences and implications of the shift in American religion toward pietistic evangelicalism/revivalism has come under critical analysis by several American historians. See McLoughlin, ed., *American Evangelicals*; William G. McLoughlin, ed., *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism: Pamphlets 1754-1789*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap, 1968); William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959); Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: from the Revolution to the Civil War* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1965); and Sidney Mead, *The Old Religion in the Brave New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

22. From its inception, Puritanism always had as part of its religion an individual experience of Christ through the Holy Spirit, a subjective realm as an essential sphere of true religion. The Great Awakening(s) elevated this corresponding relativizing ecclesial and doctrinal aspects of religion, contributing to disestablishment, the acceptance of Protestant pluralism and a relative openness to the Revolution's radical liberty. Nineteenth-century egalitarian individualism further elevated the immanental side of this equation. The holiness movement, a child of revivalism (and no small phenomenon in the nineteenth century) almost sundered the biblical-evangelical piety equation. Despite this direction, nineteenth century

Protestantism was determined to keep American society connected to its own Protestant-Christian external referents as the nation's proper mooring.

23. See Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, 2nd ed., (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 9. See also William R. Hutchison, "The Evangelical Groundwork," chap. in *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). For an understanding of the evangelical basis of liberalism, see also Lewis French Stearns, *The Evidence of Christian Experience* (New York, 1891). See also Emil Brunner, "Pietistic and Romantic Subjectivism" chap. in *The Philosophy of Religion*, 40-43.

24. Speaking of Protestant evangelicalism in the mid-nineteenth century, McLoughlin writes that even though the mainstream had become more preoccupied with the inward empirical aspects of their faith "...they (evangelicals) remained firmly wedded to the dualism between natural supernatural worlds". William G. McLoughlin, Jr., ed., *The American Evangelicals 1800-1900, An Anthology*, 14,16.

25. For a detailed discussion of this, see Harold P. Nebelsick, *Theology and Science in Mutual Modification*, (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1981), chap. 11.

26. William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *The American Evangelicals 1800-1900, An Anthology*, 2.

27. Ibid., 3.

28. Ibid., 128

29. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion*, (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 23-24.

30. 'In Schleiermacher's judgment, traditional church dogmatics, bound to scholastic and philosophical alliances, were incapable of guiding the church in the post-Enlightenment milieu. Only a total reconsideration of Christian teaching, taking into account both the essence of Christianity and the current cultural setting, could help the church face the crises of the present and of the coming future. *The Christian faith* was not merely a reformation of individual doctrines, but a new model for doing dogmatic theology'. James Duke and Francis Fiorenza, trans. intro. to *On the Glaubenslehre: Two letters to Dr. Lucke*, American Academy of Religion Texts and Translations Series, No. 3, by Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1981), 4.

31. Harold P. Nebelsick, *Theology and Science*, 89.

32. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 230.

33. Writing of Schleiermacher and those that followed in the general direction of his theological shift, Barth writes, "...they were more interested in man's relationship to God than in God's dealing with man, or to quote the well-known term of Melanchthon, more in the *beneficia Christi* than in Christ himself. This emphasis informed their interpretation of the Bible, their positive or critical attitude toward early dogmas and the confessions of the Reformation." Karl Barth, *Humanity of God*, trans. Thomas Wieser and John Newton Thomas (Atlanta: John Knox Press) 24.

34. Karl Barth, *Humanity of God*. 24.

35. Romans 10:17.

36. Harold P. Nebelsick, *Theology and Science*. 88.

37. Ibid., 83, 110.

38. "It is well to remember, as T. F. Torrance has pointed out, that Luther's original emphasis on pro me was asserted in relation to the freeing of the self from the self and easily becomes distorted into, not what Christ *has done for me*, but what *he means for me*, as is the case in the theology of Rudolf Bultman." Harold. P. Nebelsick, *Theology and Science*, 110.

39. "There are many tokens that this new passion for Augustine was of decisive importance in Luther's theological development...Melanchthon noted the importance of this period and affirmed that Luther often read and memorized Augustine's works." Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953). 92. Augustinian resources allowed Luther a conceptual implement built around grace to polemicize works, but it may be anachronistic to say that he consistently and clearly defined that grace in terms of alien forensic categories until after 1517. See Gordon Rupp,*The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies*, "Luther's Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans (1515-16)" , compared to "The Heidelberg Disputation (1518), the "Operationes in Psalmos'(1518-21)" and the 'Rationis Latomiane Confutatio (1521)."

40. "For 400 years, from Melanchthon to Sanday and Headlam, Protestant scholars were virtually unanimous that the word (dikaioun) ('justify') means 'acquit' or 'declare righteous' unanimity and vigor that the word means not only to declare righteous but to make righteous as well. In the last few years, however, the old confessional landmarks have become more and more out of date. In Europe it is becoming widely accepted that divisions on this issue now cut across denominational lines." Nigel Watson, "Justification -- A New Look, *"Australian biblical Review* 18 (October 1970): 31-2. Quoted in Robert D. Brinsmead, *"Lutherans in Crisis Over Justification by Faith"*, Verdict 2, No. 6 (November 1979) 11. "H.P. Hammann protests the predilection of many scholars for confounding justification with regeneration and in one way or another injecting sanctification into the article of justification. Hamann faults such scholars as W. Dantine, C.H. Dodd, Karl Holl, Ernst Kasemann, H. G. Pohlmann, James Stewart and Vincent Taylor...See H. P. Hamann, "Sanctification - A Symbolical, Exegetical, Dogmatical and Homiletical Study", in *Lutheran Theological Journal* 10, December 1979): 85-96. Brinsmead. "Lutherans in Crisis." 13.

41. G.C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification*, Studies in Dogmatics, (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), 55, 89, 91, quoted in Brinsmead. "Lutherans in Crisis," 14.

42. Heron, *Century of Protestant Theology,* 30. See also *Christian Faith*, p. 96-99, especially p.99.

43. For a historical and theological description of what is described here as "evangelical authority," see John Dillenberger, *Protestant Thought and Natural Science: A Historical Interpretation* (London: Collins, 1961). See especially his section, "Science in the Continental Reformation, " p 29-33. Dillenberger's study is invaluable for disclosing the vulnerability of evangelical authority to distortion. Also see Gerhard F. Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 14-15.

44. See for instance Chapter 9 of the first book of *Calvin's Institutes.*

45. Cauthen, *Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, 6.

46. Arthur C. McGiffert, "Democracy and Religion," *Religious Education*, XIV (1919), 158, 157; quoted in Smith et al, *American Christianity*, 428.

47. H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Church Against the World" *Theology in America*, ed. Sidney Ahlstrom, (Indianapolis, New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967: reprint, Chicago:Willett Clark, 1935), 599 (page references are to reprint edition).

48. Jefferson wrote to an acquaintance seeking guidance "whether the particular revelation which you suppose to have been made to yourself were real or imaginary, your reason alone is competent judge. For dispute as long as we will on religious tenets, our reason at last must ultimately decide, as it is the only oracle which God has given us to determine between what really comes from Him and the phantasms of a disordered or deluded imagination. Andrew Adgate Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh, ed. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 14 (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association), p. 197.

49. Willard L. Sperry, formerly Dean of Harvard Divinity School. Willard L. Sperry, *Religion in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1946), 148.

50. H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, Vol. II 1820-1960, (New York: Scribner's, 1963), 434-435.

51. Cauthen, *Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, 11.

52. Henry Steele Commager, "The Significance of Freedom of Religion in American History" in *Freedom of Religion in America* (Los Angeles: Center for Study of the American Experience, The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Southern California, 1982), pp. 16-17 and Sidney Mead, "The Nation With a Soul of a Church," in *American Civil Religion,* Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, ed. (New York: Harper, 1974), pp. 55-56.

53. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss:Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society* (New York: Vintage Books,1995), 98,99.

54. The legal progress of individualization is accompanied by what may properly be called cultural individualism (which means the formation of humanness in an egoistic vs. "socialistic or communitarian form"). Individualism, as such, is the problem that grows with individualization, commensurate with the strengthening of this principle and the diminishment of a social matrix in which a social/community ethic, i.e. an ethos which calls for the individual to transcend self-interest is structural.

55. See William G. McLoughlin, Jr., intro. to *The American Evangelicals*, 1800-1900: An Anthology, ed. William G. McLoughlin, Jr., (Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1968).

56. The turn toward immanence did not preclude a God behind the order, goodness and design in the world; it merely said that these were the externalizations of the divine idea or divine mind. As such, this is not a move to jettison universal truth, but it did make the presumption of an identification between what is and the divine mind. It postulated a simple correlation between the human and the divine, allowing the former a certain relativity (by virtue of its correspondence to that which theoretically could bear the weight of being absolute). A relativization of (and therefore a greater openness to) diversity was achieved by postulating this dualism, but it was by definition not a relativity intended relativism.

57. Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress, A Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 21-22.

58. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Man's Nature and His Communities* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965) 62

59. _____, *The Godly and the Ungodly* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1958) 66

60. Ibid. 73

61. Robert N. Bellah, "How to Understand the Church in an Individualistic Society" in *Christianity and Civil Society*, The Boston Theological Institute, vol. 4, ed., Rodney L. Peterson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis; Cambridge: Boston Theological Institute, 1995).

62. Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss:Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society,* 99.

63. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Last and Penultimate Things" in *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan Press Co., Inc., 1949) 143.

64. "Lipovetsky, a prominent bard of 'postmodern liberation', author of 'The Era of the Void" and 'Empire of the Ephemeric', suggests that we have finally entered the epoch of *l'apres-devoir*, a post-deontic epoch, where our conduct has been freedom from the last vestiges of oppressive 'infinite duties', 'commandments' and 'absolute obligations'. In our times, the idea of self-sacrifice has been delegitimized; people are not goaded or willing to stretch themselves to attain moral ideals and guard moral values; politicians have put paid to utopias; and yesterday's idealists have become pragmatic. The most universal of our slogans is 'No excess!' Ours is the era of unadulterated individualism and the search for the good life, limited solely by the demand for tolerance (when coupled with self-celebratory and scruple-free individualism, tolerance may only express itself as indifference). The 'after-duty' era can admit of only a most vestigial, 'minimalistic' morality: a totally new situation according to Lipovetsky--and he counsels us to applaud its advent and rejoice in the freedom it has brought in its wake." Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 2-3.

"Recent liberal theorists of freedom and citizenship have generally been content to assume that the act of voting constitutes a sufficient degree of democratic involvement, and that our civic liberties are best secured not by involving ourselves in politics, but rather by erecting around ourselves a cordon of rights beyond which our rulers must not trespass." Quoted in Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*.

65. Daniel L. Dreisbach, ed., *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic: Jasper Adams and the Church-State Debate* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 22.

66. Melvin I. Urofsky and Philip E. Urofsky, *Two Hundred Years of Mr. Jefferson's Idea: A 'Wall' of Separation: The Expansion of Religious Freedom in the United States*, (Richmond: Virginia Department of Education). Robert Boston, *Why the Religious Right Is Wrong* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1993).

67. From the beginning, the Puritan mind-set viewed the Bible as a source of universal social truth and standard of moral norms. When the Enlightenment elevated reason and natural law as a source of truth in America, for most Protestants it was viewed as another reference for truth, not fundamentally in tension with revealed truth. It was simply a second reference of truth which had its own provenance. For instance, as Stanley Grenz pointed out, Isaac Backus saw morality derived from a twofold source of truth, natural and revealed. "Natural truth of reason is to be legislated, whereas supernatural truth of revelation is to be reserved for ecclesiastical jurisdiction... This had the effect of dividing ethics into categories

of natural (reason) and supernatural (revelation). Unfortunately, he did not devise an eternally valid means to delineate clearly where this division ought to fall." Stanley Grenz, "Isaac Backus and his vision of church-state relationships: 'Sweet Harmony,'" *REPORT from the CAPITAL* (March 1985), 5. When the republic commenced on its own premises, Protestants continued to insist on the universal social character of Christian-revealed truth as a standard for social norms. See Perry Miller, "Law and Morality" in *Life of the Mind of America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1965), 205-206. But the Enlightenment standard of reason had as its goal ideal a secular moral reference for society.

"James McClellan, a biographer of Justice Story, observed that Adams's sermon 'deals with this very issue of the absolutist [i.e., strict separationist] versus the no preference theories at both the state and federal levels.' A nonpreferentialist, McClellan described Adams as 'an informed critic of lithe wall of separation theory' whose sermon 'offers an abundance of evidence to refute the notion that church-state relations in early nineteenth century America ever followed the absolutist example offered by Jefferson and Madison. Story's letter further buttresses the nonpreferentialist position. Separationist advocates, in sharp contrast, have found succor in Madison's strong dissent to Adams's thesis. For example, reflecting on Madison's letter, Adrienne Koch concluded that Madison "tried to establish a secular moral order as the American political system, and thought it might be good, perhaps the best order ever devised.' These contrasting views persist to modern times." Daniel L. Dreisbach, ed., *Religion and Politics in the Early Republic* (Lexington, Kentucky:The University Press of Kentucky, 1996) 22, 48-49.

68. The early colonial period has a monolithic reference point most fully personified by the Puritans, (that is, scripture as reasonable and comprehensive) providing guidelines for public standards of truth and right. With the rise of the Enlightenment, Revelation has two references: scripture and nature/natural law-order. In time, after disestablishment, the rationality of natural law-order gained ascendancy and eventually pushed the scripture measurement into privacy. In time the public consensus of natural-rationally derived truth and right fragments.

69. This passage may be taken as setting the tone for the Christian Socialist and Social tradition. The Kingdom of God is demythologized and brought back to earth. It is also freed from its ecclesiastical encasement and revealed as the moral Kingdom of the brotherhood of mankind, which is unfolding upon earth through a progressive victory of good over evil, reason over ignorance." Rosemary Ruether, *The Radical Kingdom, The Western Experience of Messianic Hope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1970.) Speaking of the Enlightenment guild of the Founding Fathers, Christopher Lasch writes, "the liberals regarded the individual conscience as a more secure foundation of social order than religious institutions." Christopher Lasch, The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1991), 258.

70. Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within The Limits Of Reason*, trans. Theodore M. Green & Hoyt H. Hudson (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1960).

71. The Enlightenment, as Jefferson envisioned, included no public role or voice for the church(es). In his reckoning, the post-disestablishment Protestantism had one remnant function which corresponded to its private location in society, namely, fostering individual piety, morality and virtue. These were thought to have a reciprocal impact on society. The absence of a common religious base (arising out of sectarian pluralism) required the emergence of two "languages": one, private (corresponding to one's sect) and one public

(corresponding to a rational universalism). The famous letter by Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist is usually read from the perspective of the individual's/church's/ immunity from government's intrusion. But in invoking Roger Williams' metaphor declaring a "'wall' of separation between church and state," Jefferson is simultaneously speaking about the immunity of government from the "intrusion" of the church. This, of course, is a synchronic statement. It would be anachronistic to speak of the prophetic role of the church. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5. Jefferson's Danbury Baptist letter can be found in Leo Pfeffer, *Church, State and Freedom*, Rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 133.

"There is a viewpoint which is very common among religious and irreligious people alike that separation means religion and the state should have nothing whatsoever to do with each other; that the church should be a small enclave of pietistic interests which pursues its worship and its rituals, teaches its rather recondite doctrines, and keeps its nose out of important affairs, such as politics, business, and education. Religion in this manner is effectively fenced off from culture and public life, pledged to silence about public affairs, made docile and domesticated. 'Politics and religion don't mix,' it is asserted, and 'that's what separation of church and state means.

"There is some evidence that even the great Jefferson entertained precisely these kinds of sectarian and pietistic notions about the place of religion in public affairs." James E. Wood, Jr., ed., *Baptists and the American Experience* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1976), 209.

72. Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Basic Books). See Chapters 7 & 8.

73. In this context, Jurgen Habermas writes of "non-renewable cultural resources." See Robert N. Bellah, "How to Understand the church in an Individualistic Society," in *Christianity & Civil Society*, The Boston Theological Institute, vol. 4, ed., Rodney L. Petersen (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis; Cambridge: Boston Theological Institute, 1995), 5.

74. See Robert Heilbronen, *Business Civilization in Decline*. Cf. Martin E. Marty, "A Sort of Republican Banquet," in *Religion and American Public Life: Interpretations and Explorations*, ed. Robin W. Lovin (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986).

75. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Looking into the Abyss; Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society*. New York: Vintage Books 1994.

76. In 1962 and 1963 Engle v. Vitale and Schempp v. Murry the United States Supreme Court ruled against official prayers and Bible readings conducted as part of public school programs. During the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, the public schools daily practiced these two minimalistic religious forms.

77. While the 1962 and 1963 decisions provoked an immediate out cry from conservative Protestants, that America was being secularized, as Martin Marty points out it was not until the late 1970's that fundamentalists would interpret this step as one which placed America on the proverbial slippery slope, from which they would never regain their moral footing. This conclusion persists to the present day. Marty recalls, "in 1978, John W. Whitehead, a lawyer, and John Conlan, a former Congressman, put the arsenal together in a garbled article in the Texas Tech Law Review. Fundamentalist bestsellers since then have billboarded their argument. The two authors claimed that, in a string of cases culminating in the "school prayer" decisions of 1962 and 1963, the Justices had "virtually eliminated... traditional theism" from schools. In the authors' reasoning, since *some* "ultimate concern' has to ground all talk of values and morals, *some* religion has to be privileged and established in American

public institutions. Even though the Justices had explicitly rejected this notion and carefully ruled out Secular Humanism as a candidate for such establishment, Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Conlan claimed that at least by default they had ruled it in." Martin E. Marty. "We're No Holier for Our 'Holy War'." *New York Times*, 22 July 1981.

78. James E. Wood, Jr. "Religious Fundamentalism and the New Right." *Journal of Church and State*, 22, no. 3 (1980): 420.

"Social scientists have described the rise of the religious right as an example of 'status politics,' the struggle of a declining social group to recapture some of its lost prestige and power. Status anxieties have no doubt helped motivate fundamentalists and evangelicals to participate in politics--as they also have entered, though less remarked, the bundle of motives carrying mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish establishments into political involvements. But as with mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, evangelicals have also been propelled by substantive concerns over objective conditions in social reality. The central concern that has motivated most of those drawn to politics is the decline of moral standards, particularly those relating to the family." A. James Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985), 329.

79. In the first half of the nineteenth century, two apocalyptic Christian movements were born, one in Britain, one in America. The British version, started by John Nelson Darby and Edward Irving, eventually was imported to America and became part of a doctrinal package of the more fundamentalist evangelicalism which emerged around the turn of the century. Among other emphases, this teaching looked for human affairs to become worse--the "tribulation" before which time the saints were to be secretly raptured away only to return later in a distant period to enjoy the millennium of peace. Its view of the kingdom was interventionist. Surely the correspondence of this view with fundamentalist (who lost the fundamentalist-modernist battle for the churches) and the correspondence of liberals with optimistically realized eschatologies (i.e. an "evolutionist" view of the kingdom) suggests their social location. "Harvard religion professor, Harvey Cox, noted in a recent article detailing the theology of the Religious Right that Robertson originally believed in a premillennial view of history where the last days on earth and the return of Jesus Christ was imminent. However, 'he now subscribes to a postmillenial eschatology in which Christians--at least the ones who share his views--are called upon to assume positions of power wherever they can in order to build a more righteous and God-fearing society." Quentin Lockwood III, "Missed Opportunity: The Christian Coalition and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act," Draft, submitted to Dr. Benjamin Ginsberg, Government and Policy in the United States, Johns Hopkins University.

80. Jim Wallis and Wes Michaelson, "The Plan to Save America: A disclosure of an alarming political initiative by the evangelical far right," *Sojourners* 5, no. 4 (April 1976): 5.

81. The following quotes were found in Alisa Monfalcone, "Quotations by the Religious Right Regarding: Church-State Separation, Civil Religion, Public Schools, Southern Baptist Convention," Part I of a Religion IDS Project, unpublished, (Spring 1992). "Frame [issues] in such a way that there is no mistaking who is on the right side and who is on the wrong side. Ultimately, everything can be reduced to right and wrong. Everything."--Paul Weyrich, quoted in Bill Keller, "Evangelical Conservatives Move from Pews to Polls, But Can They Sway Congress?" *Congressional Quarterly*, (6 September 1980): 2629. "We need to call America back to God, back to the Bible, and back to moral sanity."--Jerry Falwell, quoted in Marjorie Hyer, "Outflanking the Right: Mainline Clerics Oppose the evangelicals," *Washington Post*, (21 October 1980): A8. "America is in crying need of the moral vision

you have. The country needs a message of hope, love, rebirth of freedom and love of God."--George Bush, to the Liberty Federation, quoted in Kathy Palen, "Bush Calls for Revival of Nation's 'Moral Vision'," (Washington, D.C.: Baptist Press Bureau, 27 January 1986).

82. "Divorce rates are not likely to decrease, birth rates are not likely to increase, women's participation in more and more arenas outside of the house is not likely to be reversed, and children are not likely to find home an adequate substitute for the technical training required to live in this modern world. Traditional family values can be affirmed, therefore, but they are doomed to be elusive in reality." Philip Hammond, "Another Great Awakening," in *New Christian Right*, 219, quoted in A. James Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1985) 329-330.

83. Broadly speaking, "family," from the perspective of the Religious Right dating back to the 1980's, embraced the following: an emphasis on the differences between the roles of men and women in society and the home, an emphasis on the distinction between male and female gender, the exclusive conjugal context of sexual activity, the permanence of marriage, and a myriad of legislative programs and bills as well as judicial activity thought to weaken or strengthen "family." The question was and continues to be, does a particular public issue/stance weaken or strengthen the orthodox view of family, a view considered to be absolutely derived from Bible and natural law.

84. Reinhold Niebuhr makes the following observation, which applies with particular force to the present Religious Right: "The Pauline admonition against legalism... has been shockingly disregarded by most versions of the Christian faith. They have found some way of making law, whether derived from scripture or from the supposed absolutes of reason, too binding." Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History* (New York: Scribner's, 1949), 195.

85. The crux of the issue of where moral authority resides, lies at the heart of the difference between religious conservative, i.e. the Religious Right and Liberalism. The Right conceives of morality in terms of an extrinsic design which humans must live under, while the liberal locates to their own experience--within themselves and in the postmodern setting the self, not vis-a-vis societal standards but from an individual locus. What is being argued here is that one's view regarding the location of morality and their view of the role of social polity with regard to morality are axiomatic. The extrinsic model and social control reinforce each other. See James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: BasicBooks Harper Collins, 1991) and Robert Wuthnow, *Christianity in the Twenty-first Century: Reflections on the Challenges Ahead*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

86. See Rob Boston, "Marriage of Convenience: Touting a New Covenant for the Third Millennium. Traditionalist Catholic and Religious Protestant Exchange Vows at the Altar of Political Expediency," *Church & State* (May 1994), 7-10.

87. When asked in a public debate on the role of religion in public with its corresponding threat to individual liberty, Father Neuhaus replied by urging that society had within its common access, i.e. vis-a-vis natural law (also Noahide laws and general revelation) that which it needed to make public policy "order our common life together." *A Firing Line Debate: Resolved: The Wall of Separation Between Church and State Should Be Lowered*, moderator: Mike Kinsley, (New York University Law School, 8 September 1994), 9.

88. See David Barton, "The Court's Early Rulings--We Are a Christian Nation," chap. in *The Myth of Separation: What is the correct relationship between Church and State?*, 3rd ed. (Aledo, Tex.: WallBuilder Press, 1992), 47-82. See also Leonard Zeskind, *The "Christian Identity" Movement: A Theological Justification for Racist and Anti-Semitic Violence*, (Division of Church and Society of the National Council of Churches, 1986). What occurred over two decades is that the central Protestant figures of the Religious Rights, such as Rev. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, openly claimed that America was a Christian nation and called for a reform in Church-State separation. In the nineties, when Ralph Reed took the reins of the Christian Coalition, Christian nationalism was ostensibly moderated by the mainstream Right. Extreme "Reconstructionists," however, have lived on, calling for a full theocracy. For mainstream Religious Right position on America as a Christian nation, see David Barton's taped presentation "America's Godly Heritage" and the above-mentioned *Myth of Separation.*

89. "Part of the deficiency was being remedied, even as Henry wrote, by the growth of the new 'electronic church.' During the mid-1970s TV evangelists and religious entrepreneurs such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Jim Baker, Oral Roberts, James Robison, Rex Humbard and others were establishing vast audiences of evangelicals, pushing their programs onto hundreds of stations, beginning their own TV and radio networks, and encouraging the growth of 'all-Christian' local stations. In the process, they established extensive two-way communications with their followers, developed massive computerized mailing lists, and honed sophisticated modern fund-raising techniques. By January 1980, religious broadcasters claimed regular audiences including 30% of all Americans and almost half the 'born against.' The 1400 radio, 30 TV, and 60 cable TV channels specializing in religious programming generated $500 million a year in revenue and over $30 million in direct contributions. The more prominent TV evangelists claimed rapidly growing audiences and returns; by mid-1980, Falwell, Robertson, and Baker were each collecting more than $1 million a month. Falwell received money from two million viewers during 1979-80; Baker counted 700,000 regular monthly 'partners.' Although both the evangelists and the secular press had a tendency to exaggerate the size and wealth of this new religious empire, it was indeed impressive." James L. Guth, "The Politics of the 'Evangelical Right': An Interpretive Essay," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York Hilton Hotel, 3-6 September 1981.

90. "What's happened to America is that the wicked are bearing rule. We have to lead the nation back to the moral stance that made America great... [We] need to wield influence on those who govern us." Jerry Falwell, quoted in Eileen Ogintz, "Evangelists seek political clout," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 January 1980, quoted in Lockwood, "Missed Opportunity," 10-11.

91. *The Federalist Papers* #10.

92. "The Christian Coalition was established in 1989 by religious broadcaster and former Baptist, M. G. 'Pat' Robertson 'to give "Christians a voice in their government."' As of December 1995, 'the Coalition has an estimated 1.7 million direct supporters and a $25 million budget, which is a three fold increase in supporters and a doubling of the budget in just two years.' It has the precinct level organization that is significant enough to garner '18 to 20 million primary votes' in the Republican Party alone according to Ralph Reed, the executive director of the Christian Coalition. Moreover, the Coalition's fax, mail and telephone network are massive enough to shut down the Congressional switchboard and to flood Congressional offices with mail and faxes on their issues. Add to these statistics, a

1994 survey by *Campaigns & Elections* magazine, in which it found the Christian Coalition to be 'dominant' in the Republican party in 18 states and 'substantial' in 13 more, the scope of the financial and personnel power of the Coalition begins to take shape.

"On the face, Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed are looking to restore family values and halt the moral decline of American society. Yet, in his keynote address to the annual 'Road to Victory' conference Robertson stated that his goals for the organization included a 'conservative majority' in both houses of Congress and a conservative president by 1996 and that he would like to have a significant voice in one of the political parties by 1994." Lockwood, "Missed Opportunity," 7-8.

93. When the historical magnifying glass is placed on the origin of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, a close connection with prominent Reaganite Republicans comes into view. See Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life*, 319-327. Also see Bill Keller, "Who's Who in the Christian Right," *Congressional Quarterly*, 6 September 1980, 2628. See also "Religious Fundamentalism and the New Right," *Journal of Church & State* 22, no. 3 (1980): 412-414.

94. Robert Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life*, 320. According to Gary Baurer of the Family Research Council (an organization aligned with the Religious Right) and Norman Mailer (a popular left-wing political analyst and author), the 1996 presidential election results demonstrate that Robert Dole's refusal to marry the Religious Right's socio-moral agenda with the old line GOP economic agenda cost him a substantial voter block which may have kept him in serious contention. See "Focus on the Family," broadcast, December 1996, and Norman Mailer, "How the Pharaoh Beat Bogey," *George*, January 1997, 82.

95. *Presidential Biblical Scoreboard*, 1984 Quadrennial Collector's First Edition, (Costa Mesa, California.: Biblical News Service, 1984).

96. The Religious Right argues that the first Amendment clause guaranteeing the "free exercise of religion" requires government to refrain from intruding upon and limiting the people's (majority's) democratic right to express and practice their faith. No idiosyncratic claim is to be given dignity above this right. The individual or minority difference must not impede the majority's will. If there is an inconvenience, the burden is to be born by the minority. This interpretation obviously possesses far-reaching implications, in tension with a society committed to individuality, plurality, equality, and secularization. For a cogent argument in favor of the above position, see *First Things (Journal)* , *The Public Square* by Richard John Neuhaus, *"The Naked Public Square: A Metaphor Reconsidered* p 78-81. May 1992. See also John Richard Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square; The Religious Right: The Assault on Tolerance & Pluralism in America.* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1994); and Hunter, *Culture Wars.*

97. Judge Robert Bork, "Religion and the Law", paper presented at the University of Chicago, John M. Olin Center for Inquiry Into the Theory and Practice of Democracy, 13 November 1984 (Baptist Joint Committee Archives), 17.

ATTEMPTS TO CORRECT FIXITY AND FREEDOM

Modern America was formed out of both religious and secular sources. Reformed Protestantism, eventually transformed by evangelical Pietism, became the primary Protestant orientation in America. No group presented a more potent and consistent expression of the Reformed faith than the early New England Puritans. Likewise, it was the Enlightenment elites, especially Jefferson and Madison and those who stood closest to them, who influenced America's national reorganization on secular premises.

In both the mainstream Protestantism and the Enlightenment elites, a wide range of difference existed. For instance, John Adams and Alexander Hamilton, both deeply affected by Enlightenment thought, did not share the consistent, more radical vision that Jefferson and Madison did. Madison himself, educated at Princeton, may have been slightly more theistic than the consistently deistic Jefferson. Socially speaking, the Anglicans, Puritan Congregationalists and Presbyterians had something to lose with the coming of disestablishment. There were important differences in their thinking. Nevertheless, the New England Congregational Puritans and the Madison-Jefferson Enlightenment School, are perhaps the most consistent incarnations of Reformed-Calvinist Protestantism and European Enlightenment thought in America. Both capture the ideological roots out of which the impulses of "fixity" and "freedom" have been given their life in America.

Chapters Five and Six return to two developments considered to be central Christian attempts to challenge the patterns of "fixity" and "freedom." The "fixity" of New England Puritanism was challenged by Roger Williams and the early American Baptists, a challenge that began in England. Protestantism's uncritical involvement in the optimistic ideals of Enlightenment freedom and autonomy as they matured in the nineteenth century were first challenged by dialectical theology in Europe, by far the most penetrating challenge of the church.

But in America, only an academic interest was stirred by Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann. No church based movement arose out of the insights of Barth and his colleagues. However, after World War II in 1948, a different more church-based movement, the "neo evangelicals," did emerge. They explicitly attempted to position themselves between fundamentalism (who took up a separatist posture toward modernity) and liberalism (far more open to the goals and values of modernity). The

following two chapters attempt to understand how these two movements proposed to sustain differentiation from their respective worlds, so as to avoid being pulled into the grip of neo-constantinianism [i.e., "fixity"] on the one side or an idealistic engagement with modernism on the other [i.e., "freedom"].

CHAPTER FIVE

In Tension With "Fixity": The Baptist Movement in Colonial America

The attempts to formally connect society to the church's religion (i.e. fixity) presented in Chapters One and Three, have a distinctively American and nascent modern character. Seventeenth and early eighteenth century New England Puritans and nineteenth century evangelical Protestants both worked to keep society connected to Christian values and beliefs. However, the means they used to preserve this connection were "new." Over against the co-extension of church and society that was characteristic of Europe, there was an attempt to abstract religion from its ecclesial setting and connect it directly to the larger social setting. In both settings there existed a qualified idealism about the possibilities of transforming society through religion.

The beginnings of this "extra ecclesial" or "neo-constantinian" development are found in the early Puritan system. They empowered the Magistrate and the Common Court with a degree of autonomy from the church, while at the same time they insisted that their civic charge over the masses was to enforce religio-moral duties, reflecting the consensus of the church. This was the beginning of a "new" precedent in America. Although this particularly American development was modified by the national formation of a "republic," it has survived.

The first challenge to "fixity" in America came from Roger Williams and the Baptists. Williams sowed the seeds for a different vision of America, which by standards of his time, was quite radical. In his call to separate church and state, he made no formal guarantee for the minimalistic involvement of religion in society. Williams, and the Baptists before and directly after him, rethought the involvement of religion, society and church in a new way.

When Calvinism began to infiltrate Britain, it set into motion a movement to reform the Church of England and was met with ecclesiastical and political resistance. This is the setting behind the emergence of the Baptists. They were the more radical of the separatist Puritans insofar as their response to the ecclesiastical-political resistance to reform was to attempt to completely pry apart society and the church. The co-extension of church with society, held together by the alliance of ecclesiastical power with political power, came to be regarded as the root of the English problem. This fusion, they concluded, compromised the integrity of both church and society.

The question, "what were the Baptists doing?" as the contextual basis to understanding what they were saying, is crucial. Baptists exploited what may properly be called the evangelical center of the Christian message, in an attempt to effect a cleavage between society at large and the church. Puritans also had envisioned a new distinction between the world at large and the church, but Baptists went further than most Puritans, including those who emigrated to New England. Their arguments for separation are elementary, yet contain important conclusions drawn from the two poles of evangelical faith.

On the one hand, Baptists appealed to the objective theological side of the gospel, to challenge the power which held society at large and the church together. On the other hand, they appealed to the subjective side of gospel as the basis of a new organizing principle for church. The consequence was that they became forbears of the modern period in three areas, church, society and religion. In calling for a discrete "gathered" voluntary membership, they pioneered a new understanding of church. By conceiving society as an open pluralistic entity with an abridged sphere of political power limited to civil affairs, they became socio-political architects. By emphasizing the subjective side of gospel, they lent integrity and importance to religious experience and introduced the concept of understanding religion from an individual, experiential basis.

Williams and the Baptists challenged the Erastian and Constantinianism of Europe and the "neo-Constantinianism" of New England. The purpose of this Chapter is to understand the underlying logic of this challenge and to assess its strengths and weaknesses. First, the historical setting of Baptist ideas is explored, especially within their American development. Second, the implications these have had for reshaping ideas of church, society and religion are considered. Third, the strength and weaknesses of the Baptist reform are evaluated. Over against the fusion of church and society [or religion and society], the Baptists called for radical distinction. The grounds upon which they attempted to secure this distinction and the implications of this distinction are of special significance in this inquiry.

The historian William McLoughlin pointed out that the history of voluntarism [i.e., church as the voluntary association of believers] is one of both "idealism and pragmatism."[1] It is bound up with the impact of "diversity on uniformity" and the proverbial movement of social outcasts to the mainstream.[2] This review focuses on

the theological roots, rather than the sociological and pragmatic side of this development. Its aim is to disclose the ideas that informed one *kind* of church-world relation. Baptists of America started and led the battles for the political reorganization of their governments, so as to allow free and equal space within society for their own and all other religions. Originally, they came from England. Baptists were first Puritan Separatists. In order to understand their underlying persistence to continue in the direction they chose, we must look carefully at this beginning. Baptists in America slogged away against determined resistance, not always in touch with the full depth of their principles. Most often, they had to make accommodations to far less than they wanted, and they were not always clear what they did want, beyond space for themselves. In time they were joined by others who, while sharing common ends, more often than not held other visions about religion's relation to society.

The evangelical pietism of the Great Awakenings brought fresh life to the Baptists, having the effect of strengthening their protest against church-state alliances. Baptists shared a common agreement with the Great Awakening on the mainsprings of true religion. However, they recognized, in a self-conscious historical way, that these evangelical-pietistic ideas were also the source of a new relation of Christianity to society.

McLoughlin has detailed this dynamic in his two-volume *New England Dissent: 1630-1833*. Perhaps the most amazing feature of this formative period in American history is that Baptists repeatedly returned to their elementary theological convictions, and renewed their efforts for reform. The review begins appropriately with Roger Williams, then returns to the earlier sources of his ideas, before concluding with an analysis of the Baptist view of Christianity's relation to society in America, and the significance that this position has had for the problem of church-world differentiation.

Roger Williams and the Birth of a New Church - World Relation

Two years after Roger Williams came to the place he named Providence, he enlisted Ezekiel Holliman to baptize him, after which he baptized Holliman and nineteen others, all adult believers. The year was 1638. In that same year, the record shows that Williams and twelve others formalized the Providence Plantation social

compact, initiating the first social experiment limited to civil affairs ("only civil things"). The compact reads as follows...

> "We whose names are here desirous to inhabit in the towne of Providence do promise to subject (ourselves) in active or passive obedience to all such orders or agreements as shall (be) made for publick good of our body in an orderly way by the major consent of the present inhabitants maisters of families incorporated together into a towne fellowship and others whome they shall admit (un to them) *only in civill things*."[3]

It would be easy to fail to recognize the extent of these radical developments. Believers Baptism, as the formal basis of the church, functioned as the implement that pried apart a socio-religious world, held together for centuries by political power and infant baptism.[4] On the one side, Williams formed the church as a distinct and separate homogeneous society of gathered believers, ostensibly joined together by the individual freedom that comes from the inner sanction of the spirit and the outward confession of faith and piety. On the other side, he had formed a heterogeneous society which collectively consented to formalize power for justice and order, in accord with the common good; powers extending to matters of domestic and civil welfare only. Williams' contribution is that he went beyond the realm of ideas and gave each of these a distinct and separate sphere of existence. Through this development, a new church- society relation took form for the first time.[5] Invested in this separation was a redefinition of both, arising not merely from pragmatic reasons or exigencies, but from new ecclesiological and theological presuppositions.

Williams' two-pronged impulse, which separated church and state by giving the individual's experience of faith formative ecclesiological importance, and limiting the scope of government to the secular sphere, already had an ideological history of two decades in England. In order to correctly appraise this beginning and its presuppositions, it is important to see Williams in the historical context of the radical Puritan development he shared with others before him.

The Origin of Williams' Church - World Model

What was born in America was conceived in Europe. The ideas which Williams formalized in Rhode Island, first emerged in Amsterdam in exiled radical English Puritan separatists who had come into contact with Mennonites. The connection with continental Anabaptist ideas, as Estep has proven, is both

indisputable and significant. But it is the English setting of these ideas that are distinctive, and it is this setting that provides the background for the American development.[6] A sketch of Puritan beginnings is necessary to frame this discussion .

The intersection of forces in the late sixteenth century and early to middle seventeenth century that precede the transition from Puritan dissent to Puritan separatism, provide the contextual setting to properly understand and evaluate the rise of Baptists. Their initial impulses and clarifications emerged in that setting, and were by all measurements in their time, ecclesiastically and socially radical. The rise of dissent within the Church of England was due to the impact of the continental Reformation, Calvinism in particular. Calvinism altered religious sensibilities regarding the rituals and pretensions of the church. Formally, there was growing alienation from such central features of religion as the sacraments and apparently less significant practices as making the sign of the cross in Baptism, bowing at communion, and the lavish apparel of the priest. Materially, they saw the church in the continued grip of a papist system. The nature of dissent came from those on the inside who wanted change. But in this instance, it was met not only by clerical resistance, but ultimately by the crown that exerted official authority over the ecclesiastical realm, viewing itself within the Erastian model as head of the church.

The origin of Puritan separatism is the transition resulting from failed dissent; the consciences of souls once awakened, seeking respite in religious expressions, resonate to their new sensibilities. Separatism was Puritanism pushed underground, forced to create its Calvinist counterpart, unable to obtain recourse in the setting of the mother church. The two elements that provide the immediate backdrop for separatism are Calvinism's new view of the church as the citadel of true religion and the resistance to reform by hierarchical, ecclesial and political power.

Early English Puritan separatists, while seeking sanctuary in the Netherlands in the first decade of the seventeenth century, solved both needs with one answer, which both modified and added to Calvin's ideas. These separatists were the so-called first General Baptists, led by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, and later John Murton. The wheel that turned every other wheel of their reform, was a new view of the church as a people of faith, freely gathered under Christ's sole authority and word.[7]

Beginning first with their convictions about the need of Protestant reform within the Church of England (liturgy and doctrine), these Puritans proceeded further

to question the formal basis of the church as a public institution. Correcting false doctrine and "papist" liturgy could not reverse what they came to regard as a flawed foundation of the church, ultimately grounded in temporal power.[8] In the New Testament, only individuals who were regenerated to a new life and possessed a personal faith and devotion to Christ constituted the church. Furthermore, the integrity and vitality of the church depended on regeneration and personal faith. The Church of England included all subjects of the nation and used force to secure conformity to its beliefs and practices. It was this policy that was hopelessly corrupt. The true church, they claimed, was a creation of the power of the spirit and the word, symbolized in the New Testament by the phrase "the sword of the spirit" as the "word of God".[9] [10] The official authority of the bishops, backed by the literal sword of the magistrate as the basis of the church, represented an unholy alliance which disclosed it as false *religion.*[11] In the final analysis, their separation rested on this "new" ecclesiology, a conclusion which represented the climax of their pilgrimage for a pure church.

Their ecclesiology, involving pneumatological arguments, was ultimately derived from christological arguments, which insisted upon the sole propriety of Christ's lordship over the religious realm, where human beings formed belief and espoused the truth by which they lived and died. For kings and magistrates to exercise power in that domain, was to trespass beyond their rightful boundaries. It was for these reasons that they concluded that the church had become Babylon, an institution built on the confusion of power. And they were sure that the imperative in John's Apocalypse, and Paul's Epistle; "come out of her, my people..." and "come out from among them and be separate," spoke with prophetic authority to their situation. (Revelation 18:4; II Corinthians 6:17)

That history has been kind to this radical Puritan break should be no surprise. It was based not only on a critical stance toward the mother church but a vision for something new. Within it, there were the seeds of a new way of ordering society and a new understanding of church and a new view of religion. The arguments of the early leaders, John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, John Murton, M. Leonard Busher, and in America, Roger Williams and John Clark (as well the early declaration of the first Baptist association in London, 1640), all reveal similar lines of reasoning, leading to new understandings of religion and the church and involving a reordering of society.

As such, history has accorded them the dual significance of being both ecclesiastical reformers and early contributors to modern socio-political ideas.

The following summarizes what this separation meant for a new view of the church, and what it meant for a reordering of society and a new understanding of religion.

Church, Society & Religion

The Implications of Separation for a New Ecclesiology

Separation from the mother church and from society at large facilitated a new conception of the church, spiritual as well as evangelical. "Spiritual" in this setting does not indicate a consistent movement toward a subjective piety leading to a sectarian community.[12] Rather, it points to the character of their sociality, in contrast to a formal, obligatory relation to the church.

Separation facilitated the new spiritual and evangelical character of the church in several ways. First, it provided a setting in which the church could achieve "spiritual integrity." Spiritual integrity refers to the consensual integration of an individual into the church. In this setting, it was understood to involve the Spirit's leading, the action of conscience and convictions, and freely made profession of faith, resulting in real amendments to one's personal life.

Secondly, this separation was understood to give the church sufficient social distance to clarify and embody its own values, the values of the kingdom of God as opposed to the world.[13] It was Williams, not Thomas Jefferson, who first employed the metaphor "a wall of separation."[14] In his meaning, this wall divided and thus protected the garden of God's church from the wilderness of the world. In the context in which he was using it, he was lamenting the breach in the wall which allowed the world to grow freely in the church.[15] His concern was with the purity of the church.

A third nuance of this separation for the spiritual character of the church, was the new kind of power on which it relied. This power was being derived completely from below, shifting from passivity, receptivity and dependence, to that of individuals as agents and participants in their religion. Believers have unique experiences of God's grace and are able to discern and respond to God's truth.

There was, in this vision, a promise of fulfillment of Luther's "Priesthood of Believers." The church was viewed more as a community of covenanted, gifted

believers with a charge to keep one another in the way.[16] And it was upon this believing, gifted community, that the necessity for the care and renewal of the church was thrust, a necessity which would force a certain kind of spiritual strength. The direction of this shift increased the importance of the individual, and consequently moved the church toward a more egalitarian configuration of spirit gifted believers. Within this setting, the gifts and calling of the spirit tended to replace the hegemony of clergy professionals (often well educated, therefore considered well qualified). The Spirit, not training per se, brought with it the gifts the church needed.

Insofar as these spiritual characteristics alone influenced the shape of the church's relation to that of the larger mass of society, it was unlikely that this development would escape the accusation that it possessed a sectarian relation to the world, akin to continental pietism. However, Baptists, as Ernst Troeltsch points out, did not sever their connection with an objective Christian truth for an inward piety.[17] For the most part, they remained confessional and they understood themselves in the context of mission. As a modified expression of Calvinistic Puritanism, they retained the identity of calling. Most importantly, this view displaced the idea of Christendom, creating a new distinction which would allow the church to face the world again evangelically in the form of witness and influence.

In short, the cleavage between the church and society at large was thought to create a proper distance for the church to find its true calling as an agent of the gospel. The logic behind this impulse originated from the Puritan conviction that the Christian truth was objective and universally important. Commensurate with this understanding, the church was vocationally correlated to the world. The effect of this ecclesiology, was to spawn a new estimate of the importance, validity and autonomy of an individual religious experience.[18] This Baptist evangelical Pietist experience remained tied to an objective biblical reference and integration into a covenant community with a vocational posture. Robin Lovin captures something of what it meant to live within a covenant framework:

> "A covenant society is one in which the members are bound together by choice, by mutual commitment, more than by chance. A covenant society is one in which the members see their moral obligation as growing out of this commitment, so that they hold their neighbor to a higher standard of conduct than they might if they were just thrown together at random; they expect more of themselves and they acknowledge that others who share in the covenant have a right to examine and criticize their behavior. It is not the moral health

> of each individual which is under scrutiny, but the righteousness or waywardness of the whole society. This sense that there is a common good, a well-being of the whole society that cannot be measured just by summing up the achievements and faults of all the individuals in it, is crucial to the covenant ideal."[19]

The Implications of Ecclesial Separation for a Reordering of Society

Early on, the Puritans who became Baptists (English and American) were conscious of their role as social architects. It is the constructive character of their vision of themselves in this role, more than any other characteristic, that sets them apart from even the pietistic continental Anabaptists, who first conceived of church-state separation.[20] The view of the church, existing in distinction from the social world at large led early Puritan Baptists to embrace radical social views. It is unlikely that they would have arrived at these views apart from the fact that the logic inherent in their new ecclesiastical ideas forced them to these frontiers.

The first premise was the limitation of government in things both secular and civil, leaving the realm of religion solely in the hands of Christ and his agent, the churches, who used only the sword of the spirit and the word to sway men and women to the truth. This limitation, if effected, necessitated three immediate social changes. First, what it took away from government in the name of the sovereign Lordship of Christ, it of necessity conferred on individuals. While early Baptists did not conceive of individuals as having rights in a modern sense, the abridgement of government implied the inviolability of the person in realms that pertain to religious conscience, beliefs, worship, involving speech and assembly.

Regardless of the theological axiom from which this was conceived, when it was translated into the ordering of society, it took on a form which regarded and protected certain spheres in a person's life as inviolable. This concept holds a latent idea of human rights and freedom. It cannot be overemphasized that these ideas did not originate from early Enlightenment sources with their more optimistic anthropology. The Baptist conception is derived primarily from theological and ecclesiastical sources.[21]

Second, they recognized that abridging government's power in the religious realm, invited religious pluralism. Repeatedly, these early reformers unequivocally stated their belief that society should be allowed to be religiously plural, even as far as

to allow for "papist, Jews, Turks or atheists."[22] Of course, no other consequence was possible if the civil power to restrain the expression of religious ideas was removed. This was not an early manifestation of social libertarianism in the truest sense. They were not compromising their belief in the universal importance of the Christian truth, but they were relinquishing the idea of a Christian state. Pluralism was a necessary risk, the concomitant of achieving a pure church, of realizing the true force of religion in society. The new space where pluralism would grow, they urged, was the very setting in which the church could realize its true mission in Evangelism.[23] With pluralism, they foresaw the risk of fracturing the visible uniformity of truth with the corresponding consequence of loosening society's binding to religious and moral underpinnings. Invested in this were ancient ideas of Christian civilization.[24]

But, over against the risk of a moral-religious void or chaos, they argued that the economy of the Spirit was one of freedom. The removal of heteronomous control was understood in juxtaposition to new possibilities to be realized in a more open setting. Appeal to the authenticity and potency of the spiritual, in a climate of freedom, is not to be misconstrued as severing connection with objective truth. Rather, it stemmed from a new confidence in freedom as an axiom of true religion. To live in the tensions and risks of pluralism, or even to tolerate secularists, it was urged, required spiritual maturity. Truth, they were confident, would triumph. Christ's kingdom was in good hands, albeit invisible hands. This view meant that human efforts to control and visibly order the rule of truth on earth were misdirected.[25]

Third, the early Baptist vision of society was to make it more civil rather than achieve a Christian civilization. Christian civilization, they argued, rather than producing civility, corrupted society. The use of coercion over human souls did not bring justice and peace, but bloodshed, tyranny, and evil. Therefore, they called for the end of "Christendom" and replaced it with a more modest goal: civility achieved through the reform of power.

At the heart of this reform, was the relationship of religion and society. The Baptists call for the repeal of religion from its formal imposition over society, was by all accounts a radical idea for its time. For over a millennium Christianity had existed as religio-publicus. To disenfranchise society from of a formal religion and religion from its captivity as a public institution, was regarded as an equation that would spell

the demise of both society and religion.

From the start, the primitive Baptists argued that in fact, the opposite would occur. Given a more open forum, society would become more civil and religion would become more potent.

The Implication of the Baptist-Evangelical Position for Religion

The Puritan passion for a true and pure church not only focused on the outward forms of religion, its teachings and ritual, but on the spiritual integrity of each of its members. Rather than the entire mass of society being conjoined to the church, only individuals who had an experience of regeneration and faith with a corresponding amended life, were allowed into the church. For the radical Puritans who became the Baptists, baptism was predicated on such an experience, along with a suitable confession of faith in Christ.

The significance of this new elevation of giving a person's religious experience decisive ecclesiological and salvific importance, cannot be overestimated. In this shift, an experience of grace was being given a new dignity - a unique validity. The individual possessing such an experience found him or herself immediately graduated into an ecclesial fraternity. The 'political' effect of this change was to make religion more autonomous, to give it a place outside of social or even ecclesial jurisdiction or control.

This partial shift to the subjective would in time be increasingly exploited to meet tensions between a pluralistic society and the established church. It represented, in its seventeenth century inception, the frontier of a new understanding and locus of religion. During the periods in which the Baptists existed as a dissenting people, their public call for reform appealed to the sanctity of an individual's conscience and experience in religious realms.[26] While they had arrived at this estimate from theological and pneumatological convictions (not from a new humanistic appraisal), their public argument drew on the human-individual logic of the propriety and inviolability of persons. The distinctive importance of the Baptists is not in their uniqueness in elevating this aspect of religion. Rather, it is in their insistence on its use to reconstruct church and society. The continental Anabaptists had already begun to emphasize the importance of experiencing grace and a life of piety. Later, this emphasis would form the substance of the Great Awakenings in America, the rise of

Methodism in England and continental pietism.

The significance of having a religious experience in America in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, can be stated as comprising one indispensable condition for inclusion in the church, a church which made a particular confession of faith. Later in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, experience begins to be abstracted from this confessional - ecclesial setting. In the nineteenth century, the question turned to what particularly experience is; there is a search for conceptual material to color it. And the nineteenth century witnesses the relative success of this consensus in America, that religion at its root, is personal and individual--a principle that contributed to the repeal of ecclesiastical establishments and the official commencement of church in its new form of social "voluntarism." It is also this impact that helps break down sharp denominational divisions by elevating a common evangelical experience.

The conceptual material that interpreted and informed this religious experience was principally evangelical, a truly informed experience. As such, it possessed identifiable constituents of a sense of personal unworthiness and failure before a holy God (with a corresponding conviction of one's sins), a sense of God's grace and forgiveness given freely in Jesus Christ, and a new faith or trust in Jesus Christ as savior (with appropriate attitudes and actions relating to amending one's life). In the Great Awakenings, this kind of experience was evoked through preaching that stimulated imagination. The confessionalism and formalism of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries comprised a seed bed for the rapid growth of the "new" idea of religion, organized around human affections and interiority.

To define this experience simply as evangelical, is of course naive. As William McLoughlin has demonstrated, this experience was subjected to continual interpretation in America.[27] Jonathan Edwards, drawing from Lockean empiricism and Calvinistic Puritan ideas about the sovereignty and glory of God, conceived it as an experience that enabled persons to transcend bondage to self interest so as to become "disinterestedly benevolent," a transition wholly incapable for humans, apart from an inward miracle creating new springs of desire for "Being."

Later, the ideas of the Scottish common sense, mixed with Arminian views, greatly compromised the profundity of Edwards' analysis. Under the influence of these, the evangelical experience was conceived as an awakening of the latent moral

faculty which existed in all individuals. By the Spirit the conscience was stirred, but it was the individual who decided and acted on these convictions. Human beings were not only given a larger role, but their role in moral terms was less spiritual and theological. Right and wrong were ontologically resident in individuals, and the Spirit of God enables human beings to realize their human potential. This "Arminianizing" of the evangelical experience, can be understood as its Americanization; it echoed the image of independent entrepreneurial individualism that characterized the times. Still, later in the nineteenth century, aspects of the evangelical experience would come under the additional influences of romanticism and Kant.

The common denominator of the American evangelicalism (which grew out of Puritan Baptist beginnings) was its emphasis on individual religious experience. Just as a new socio-cultural world, organized around individual rights and freedoms, was being born, Christianity in America came to be dominated by a new evangelical individualism, one which gave persons a unique dignity and integrity, elevating a rather simple individualistic idea of right and wrong. Only later would this emphasis contribute to a new understanding of religion as primarily personal and individual.

This understanding became in time a trademark of American religion. In the American beginning, this was most fully embodied by both Puritanism (cf. Cotton Mather) and Roger Williams and the Baptist insistence on regeneration as one condition for church membership.[28] But in that period, it was Williams who boldly extended the idea of a regenerate membership to its logical conclusion, the complete secession of church from the state. In the eighteenth century, the Great Awakening in general (and Jonathan Edwards in particular) would intensify this direction, implicitly relativizing the formal, dogmatic and social-ecclesial prerogative of religion, by pointing to the reality and imperative of religious affections.

In the nineteenth century, the priority of the experiential in religion became nationally universalized and diversified. Rationalists, transcendentalists, evangelical revivalism, the holiness movement (as well as nascent liberalism) placed importance on individual religious experience and the sanctity of conscience. The importance of the primitive Puritan insight, which belonged primarily to the Baptists in the colonial setting, was that individual religious experience and church membership were bound together.

The Progress of Baptists in Eighteenth Century America and the Work of Isaac Backus

There are three stages in the development of this evangelical-Baptist model. The first two have been reviewed; first, the emergence of these ideas as an outgrowth of radical Puritan separatism and, second, the early formation of these ideas in what came to be known as Rhode Island. Williams was also an original thinker and contributed to the clarification of the ideas which had emerged two decades earlier in England. John Clark also played a very important role in the political success of gaining the lasting charter that reflected Williams' vision for Providence. Unlike Williams, he was a steady Baptist leader, contributing substantively to both sides of the "lively experiment." The amazing feature of Providence and the Rhode Island colony was that it formalized this new church-society relationship almost a century and a half before America structured it for the nation in the Bill of Rights. The period of time between Williams' beginning in 1638 and the 1797 Bill of Rights can rightly be understood as the third phase.

The early Puritan separatists who kindled the Baptist development, had stumbled on "new" evangelical-spiritual (or pietistic) axioms for religion and church. But rather than spreading quickly either in Britain or America, they were largely met with resistance. This was predictable since, of course, they challenged central claims of the existing church and state arrangement. By the end of the seventeenth century, the new ideas had settled into a sectarian form of religion at the margins of society, increasingly gaining modest levels of toleration.[29]

In Massachusetts and Connecticut, one historian of the period recorded about twenty-one congregations as late as 1740.[30] Rhode Island, which guaranteed religious liberty, counted only seven. Williams' Rhode Island experiment was regarded by the mainstream Protestants of the day as a failure. It was not viewed as capturing the spirit of the future by New Englanders, but one of misguided libertinism.[31] At best, the Baptists, both in England and America, were a fledgling movement making incremental progress. In the eighteenth century, this was to change dramatically.[32]

Two intersecting and complementary movements, one religious and the other political, lifted Baptist principles into the mainstream of American society like an incoming tide. First came the Great Awakening and then the Enlightenment rationalism that was appropriated for the American Revolution. Through these two

movements, the underlying basis of religion and of government was to fundamentally change. The evangelical pietism of the Great Awakenings was essentially an eighteenth century revival of the original Puritan-Baptist axioms of religion, a shift from the formal heteronomous religion that was controlled by professional clerics (and backed by civil ordinances and magistrates) to one grounded in a personal experience of grace. In New England, the Great Awakening (which started in 1726 with a pietist Dutch Reformed minister), jumped denominational boundaries, divided the Congregationalists, and gave fresh impetus and growth to the Baptists, revitalizing not only their churches but their protest for a new way of ordering religion in society.

Perhaps no one more than Isaac Backus, a New Light Congregationalist who turned lay Baptist preacher, is qualified to represent and articulate the importance and consequences of evangelical pietism for the emerging social ordering of religion in America. Backus is an important figure because of his original connection to the Great Awakening before becoming a Baptist. He absorbed its new locus of religion and then reflected on it with impressive logic. As will be discussed, it was this logic that accounted for his alignment with Baptists and his outspoken and unrelenting insistence that the old Congregationalist system of a coordinate fusion of church and society was dated. True principles were emerging with a clarity which necessitated socio-political changes.

Backus published, preached and petitioned for nearly fifty years against a system that continued to create hardship through fines, confiscation of property and imprisonment for reasons bound to no other than lack of religious conformity. He articulated at a conscious level what generally became true in America.

Although not fully grasped or implemented in every detail, and although it was constantly adapting to existing ecclesial structures, many American churches moved in form, if not also in spirit, toward the individual piety centered religion that had permeated New England and the southern colonies through the Great Awakenings. Backus conceptually articulated the logical correlation between the new emphasis on the imperative of an evangelical experience and the reorganization of religion in society to a place where it would be free and voluntary. "Religion," Backus urged, " was a matter between God and individuals."[33] "As God is the only worthy object of all religious worship, nothing can be true religion but a voluntary obedience unto his will...Religion...can be directed only by reason and conviction not by force or

violence."[34] For these reasons, church must be a voluntary freely gathered body within society rather than coterminus with society.

This is the main basis of his public argument; namely, that in society, religion is to be voluntary and disentangled from civil laws and political powers. To repress one form and coerce and establish another form, even if allowances were made for non-conformists, was to violate the delicate fabric of true religion, which suffered to the extent leverage was attached to it. The source of this conviction, as has been alluded to, did not come first from reflection or study, but from his own experience of conversion.[35] Conformity to religious ordinations and a formal alliance with the church did not provide a place in the kingdom of God. Only regeneration can fit one for that honor. "No man can see his kingdom nor have the power therein without regeneration."[36]

It is important to recall that this is not a mere religious experience but an evangelical experience, one informed by the New Testament constants of Christ's forgiving grace and one's own sense of sinfulness. This evangelicalism brought with it both a new appreciation for the individual and the Christian community of faith. Most conversions, as McLoughlin points out, took place outside the church meeting in private, alone "between God and the soul."[37] As Backus witnessed, Christ was like the shining sun whose:

> "rays appear to point as directly to us as if there was not another person in the world for it to shine upon. And we partake as it were, of the whole benefit of its influence; and yet tis as free for thousands of others as for us...when any soul is brought to behold his glories, them [sic] eternal rays of light and love shine down particularly upon him to remove his darkness, heal his wounds and shed immortal blessings on his soul."[38]

This experience carried with it both social-egalitarian and political implications. Originally, Congregationalists were Puritans in search of a true church, allowing only members who were proven by examination to be true Christians.[39] Over time, this standard became more formalized and infant baptism (even of children of nonmembers) was accepted, all but guaranteeing that the church would eventually become co-extensive with a certain class of society and its values. Eventually, the only measurement for membership was a bourgeois moral rectitude.[40]

The Great Awakening clarified for Backus the true make-up of the church, which alone could guarantee its purity and distinction. In 1754, he wrote on this

proper basis of the church...

> "Let me inquire where God has shown you that you (i.e. addressing the Congregational Pedobaptists) shall be a father of many nations and that a church shall spring from you which shall be large and that natural instead of *spiritual birth* shall bring persons into it? Here lies the pinch of the point...Natural birth and some outward ceremonies then brought persons into the church and into the priesthood, but now spiritual birth and the work of God's grace is necessary in order to bring souls aright into the church and the ministry".[41]

Backus, having first clarified individual religion/regenerated church, entered the fray, calling for a disentanglement of church and state, so as to relocate the church's place in society as free and voluntary, open to and made up of all peoples. Christianity, viewed as a regenerate community of faith, was antithetical to Christianity as an institution with the power to extend its religio-moral tenets over the whole of society. Backus' argument, cast in a mid-eighteenth century context, recalls similar arguments of the early English development and Roger Williams. He argues for the two swords having two spheres and two kinds of power. "My kingdom is not of this world...else my servants would fight...I come to bear witness to the truth," (John 18: 36,37)

Backus comments...

> "the true difference and exact limits between ecclesiastical and civil government is this, that the church is armed with light and truth to pull down the stronghold of inequity and to gain souls to Christ and into his church to be governed by his rules therein, and again to exclude [only] such from their communion who will not be so governed, while the state is armed with the sword to guard the peace and the civil rights of all persons and societies."[42]

He urged the abridgement of the government's power over the consciences of its citizens, based on Christ's prerogative and sole authority over his church and its members.

> "And when the son of God, who is the great law-giver and king came...and established a better covenant or constitution of his church...we are assured he was faithful in all his house. What vacancy has he left then for fallible men to supply, by making new laws to regulate and support his worship."[43]

> "The first and capital article in his (Christ's) doctrine is that he is head over all things to the church...a fourth (article) is that the civil magistrates power is limited."[44]

As for the risk of evacuating religion from society by insisting that religion be voluntary, he urged the evangelical optimism that truth and true religion in this new form would triumph. Like Williams, Backus was not so much concerned about the effect of freedoms on social order and moral harmony, but the corrupting effect that the entanglement of religious and political power would have on the peace and harmony of society. At the same time, Backus was not the radical that Williams was. His principles and arguments implied a pluralism, but he failed to be consistent with his own principles.

Summary and Application

The Baptist answer to pre-modern "fixity" [i.e., the co-extension of church and society – England] and to nascent modern "fixity" [i.e., the co-extension of religion and society – New England], was to redefine Christianity as a discrete community of regenerate believers. This involved a partial redefinition of society and religion.

Fixity and the Baptist Idea of Church, Society and Religion

Church

Baptists only valued that Christianity which possessed spiritual integrity and such a Christianity, they were sure, could only be realized by creating a separate and distinct community of faith and piety. Attempts to connect either Christianity or Christian beliefs directly to society at large were wrong to Baptists, primarily because these compromised the essence of Christianity. Christianity for Baptists was strictly an ecclesial fellowship, not a socio-political entity. Their zeal was directed toward the goal of achieving Christianity's spiritual integrity by returning it to an ecclesial locus. The church's socio-cultural separateness was the formal requirement for Christianity to recapture its essential character and power. "Fixity" would be wrong by Baptist principles mainly for contextual reasons. They argued that when society was Christianized via infant baptism and political power, no proper environment existed whereby Christianity was able to achieve its proper spiritual character, either as a community in fellowship or in its mission of witnessing to the world.

The church as a freely gathered people, existing in associational distinction from society is the basis of the church's spiritual integrity and can be understood as the

formal criterion of its social relevance. The primitive Baptist insistence on distance, and the fact that it was to be supported "spiritually" and evangelically, has merit. In the American post-Bill of Rights era, all churches and religious orders are organized on a voluntary associational principle. The fact that Baptists and evangelicals emphasized that the integrity of this association is to be derived from "below", (i.e. from members, spiritually), can be a strength which supports community, complementing its institutional character, and thereby underwriting its substantive differentiation from the larger socio-cultural world.

Williams and the Baptists rightly understood that the power and purity of the church was commensurate with its distinction from the world. That which sustains distinction, comprises the potential basis for truly relevant interaction with the world. Distinction potentially keeps the church in touch with its own unique sources, so that it can address the world and the problems from a perspective not available from within the world. Williams' wall of separation can function to inform the church's distinction from the world, thereby empowering a critical and redemptive relationship to its world.

Williams and the early Baptist reflection on the English Erastian configuration of religion and society, concluded that the power of religion in society was commensurate with its spiritual integrity, not its extensive parameters, i.e. quality, not quantity. Their focus was not on withdrawing religion from society, but creating a context in which the power of Christianity to influence its world could be fully exercised and its effects realized.

Religion

Integral to this idea that Christianity requires a distinct spiritual community is the concept that religion has to do with the inner sanction of the spirit and not outward constraint. Religion that imposes upon a person moral and dogmatic tenets is not true religion. According to the premises of the early Baptists, pre-modern and modern ideas of "fixity" were wrong because they trespassed into the realm of Christ's sovereignty over souls and violated the true nature of religion which corresponded to the proper faculty of human response and motivation - the conscience.

Society

The Baptist idea of society was also in tension with modern patterns of fixity. In Chapters Two and Three it was argued that the Founding Fathers idealized republican freedom. That is to say, they regarded it as the key to human social betterment, not just a guiding principle for reconstructing political power. Most nineteenth century Americans believed that the United States was special and that it was called into existence by the providence of God to inaugurate a new and better religio-political chapter in the history of humankind. From the beginning, Baptist premises fostered a more critical perspective. In the early decades of the seventeenth century, Baptists distinguished themselves from their fellow Puritans by resisting the monopolistic vision of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. As shown, their focus was on the church, not on creating an ideal socio-cultural world. They were in favour of political reform so that the church could achieve its proper form. For them, the realm of civil power existed to restrain evil and preserve liberty, not to create an ideal social order. Both Williams and Backus polemicized the Puritan passion to order the world according to a unitary religious vision. As already noted, this did not mean that Baptists abandoned their belief in an objective truth which possessed universal significance. They simply did not attempt to historicize it except through evangelical witness. For Williams the truth had already achieved historical incarnation in Jesus Christ. To attempt a religio-political creation of truth was to deny Jesus Christ had come in the flesh.

In the nineteenth century, when many evangelicals became enamored with the potential that republicanism and revivalism seemed to present for ushering the millennium, many Baptists remained intransigently other worldly.[45]

The Baptist-evangelical view of society, especially its insistence that society be relieved of over-arching religious constructs, is especially pertinent. By abridging government's province to one of order and freedom (as it eventually came to be viewed in America), it underwrote the right of voluntary associations to compose their own ultimate meaning and value. The idea that this redefinition of the role of government hopelessly fragments and weakens society, is countered by the argument that overarching ideological and religious constructs imposed on society *en masse* from above are potentially tyrannous and idolatrous. The right of the people to form their own meanings, has the negative value of contradicting the rise of monopolistic

religious definitions, and the positive value of creating webs of meaning in societies in which people integrate. From one standpoint, the multiplicity of these narratives need not be interpreted as evidence of social fragmentation, but rather as penultimate meanings and unities, symbols of hope in messianic trust.[46]

Baptist minimalist views of government were constructed in response to what they perceived as the overreach of power. Williams and Clark created a social model in which political power was bounded by a higher religious prerogative and not the other way around. This precedent has served as a corrective to reaffirm religious liberty as a right rather than a privilege. Over against the propensity of political power to trespass its bounds, the church(es) are empowered to critique government in the name of the gospel and the Lord of the gospel and insist on its proper limits.

It is this point that opens up the discussion of the relationship of religion to the state. Furthermore, this point has implications about the way individual liberty is understood. This is poignantly disclosed by Williams' defense of women's "rights" to attend religious services. The logic to which he appealed was not the Enlightenment's anthropological appraisal of reason's sufficiency. Rather, it was made on a theological basis. God has the first and ultimate claim on the person. Therefore, society must be organized so as to make room for and respect that claim and its outworking. Neither patriarchical authority or civil authority took precedence. There existed no view of individual right and liberty which arose out of a dogma of the autonomy of the self. The fear of obstructing conscience was not first an awakening to human rights (although that was a derivative fact). It was the fear of trespassing in that realm which was properly God's domain. As such, freedom was always axiomatic to transcendent references. In short, the early Baptists had no framework for an anthropologically-grounded view of freedom. But this very fact also contributes to a potential for Baptist evangelical type groups to be naively pulled into misguided attempts to circumscribe religio-moral pluralism as McLoughlin observed. Backus preferred to argue as Roger Williams had done, for the divine rights of God rather than for the natural rights of man. In fact, it may be said that the Baptists never came to wholly accept the Lockean theory of religious liberty in Jeffersonian rationalist terms - a fact which explains why it was so easy in the nineteenth century for the evangelical inheritors of the separatist-Baptist viewpoint to ignore the rights of non-evangelicals (Catholics, Mormons, the Indians, atheists, Free Masons), in order to protect the moral order of a Protestant

nation.[47]

What does this mean for the Baptist view of an entire society organized around freedom? Two perspectives in particular can be traced to Baptist beginnings. First, Baptist support for the Revolution and the liberal organizing of society was grounded in a functional rather than an idealistic view of freedom. Freedom was necessary for the gospel's power to be effective. Second, the Baptist entry into the mainstream, effected by the Great Awakening, had remnants of Puritanism in it.

During the period of the first Great Awakening, many of the "New Light" Puritans joined or formed Baptist churches because of the resistance they encountered in their original congregations. Like Isaac Backus, they brought with them strong reservations toward Enlightenment freedom. But, unlike Roger Williams, they were favorable to the social establishment of minimalistic religio-moral values and beliefs. It is this history that may explain the recent direction of the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention to "lower the wall" of separation of church and state.[48]

The Weaknesses in Baptist Reformulation of Church, Religion and Society

Attempting ecclesial integrity by exalting an empirical experience of faith and regeneration, involves a corresponding risk of creating a righteous separatism from the world. James Wood, Jr., a former director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, makes the following historical indictment. Writing about religion in the colonial period he says...

> "Antinomians, Baptists and Quakers... exemplified the sectarian [type]... The sectarians washed their hands of the filthy world, limited membership in the church--a voluntary association-- to the saints, and struggled for freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state."[49]

Exploiting the subjective side of the gospel to underpin the integrity and discrete existence of the church from the world meant in part that the righteousness that functioned to effect ecclesial separatism from the world resided in the "saints." Therefore, a thoroughgoing human difference was perceived as guaranteeing this cleavage. This bifurcation made the church vulnerable to a church-world dualism and to apocalypticism. It cannot be denied that the separation achieved by Baptists and other evangelical groups involved them in a problematic separatism from their world and its plight. Separation can be exploited for separatism, a prospect that distorts

church and robs the world. Roger Williams' proverbial "wall of separation" between the church and world can problematically insulate these two from a proper encounter with each other, breeding ecclesial esotericism, narrowness and cultural secularism.

Baptists achieved their separating principle as it relates to church-world, world-church cleavage, by appealing to two criteria. First, they argued for the limitation of political power of the civil realm by appealing to the sovereignty of God as alone Lord over the souls of women and men. Second, they argued for the separation of the church from the world by insisting on the requirement of spiritual change. Inclusion into the church by this requirement was decided by measuring the authenticity of one's conversion. The historical origin of this, as shown, was the Puritan idea of the Pure gathered and covenanted church, over against the Erastian ecclesial model of the coextension of society with church. The effect of this, both to early Puritans and Baptists, was that of placing ecclesiology on the side of human change. To the degree that this aspect was magnified, ecclesiology was given an experiential or cultic grounding.

An empirical experience of religion, rather than being accidental, increasingly became determinative of the church's self-understanding. In this shift, the subjective pole of the gospel was made to bear the primary weight of the church's social difference (or an individual's social difference). This eased the problem of Christian denominational pluralism, which engendered strident sectarianism but fostered righteous parochiality and experiential "culticism."

What then does the exclusive principle of this microcosm, the church, rest on, if not experiential authenticity and/or doctrinal purity? There is another possibility having to do with the "objective" side of the gospel. It is sufficient to suggest here that the spiritual character of those comprising the church itself does not bear the primary weight for its social difference. The church's separate social reality is an imperfect reflection of a transcendent ground of human unity. (This is spelled out in Chapter Seven). Accordingly, in this the accent is not laid on the church's qualitative difference from the world, but the world's pretense to order itself in tension with the new unity of humanity that the Messiah has inaugurated. The church is then merely an imperfect response to that reality.

Where ought the weight or priority be shifted? The "Objective" or transcendent and the experiential immanent must not be played off against each other.

There is in this a tension, something akin to the Chalcedonian formulation (union without fusion, distinction without separation) with the priority laid on the transcendent. Separation resting on criteria immanent to humanity or the resident righteous difference of the church, can only end in exacerbating the dividedness of humanity, and making religion into a dividing rather than a unitive force. But without a mechanism to guarantee or anchor distinction, the church would be pulled into the world's cultural ethos and, to a greater or lesser degree, forfeit or lose itself. But a basis of unity that transcends human particularity and human transformation, not immanent to humanity itself, theoretically offers a true universalism.

The Baptist call for ecclesial separation also has negative implications for understanding society. Baptist logic required abridging government so that it simply exerted police power to maintain peace and order, thereby ensuring their religious rights and other individuals' rights and freedoms from trespass. This thinking was in part naive. It failed to anticipate the need for a broader constructive use of power because of problems arising from urbanization, industrialization or even slavery, problems having to do with structural injustice and inequality which were rooted deeper in society than individual infractions of law and order.

While it is true that the eighteenth century and a large part of the nineteenth century did not, and perhaps could not foresee these problems, it is also true that the social-political viewpoint created by Baptist-evangelical thinking could and did blind them when social protest and political intervention was called for. Also, viewing the essence of religion in individualistic experiential pietistic categories, further contributed to social blindness.

Pietistic evangelical individualism was not well suited for the problems of the industrial age. The great Evangelists of the nineteenth century reveal the stark limitations inherent in their logic. Charles Finney frankly confessed that while slavery was wrong, it would be no use to attempt to eradicate it until the hearts of the southern masters were converted by the gospel.[50] As William McLoughlin says, "the road to the millennium lay through God's reformation of the human heart. All man-made efforts of social reform...were sheer folly."[51] Dwight Moody, the foremost evangelical revivalist of the post Civil War era said, "It is a wonderful fact men and women saved by the blood of Jesus rarely remain subjects of charity, but rise at once to comfort and respectability."[52] "Christianity is your character and character is your capital," was the

persuasive evangelical sentiment.

There are two further implications of evangelical pietism that are potentially problematic. First, the evangelical emphasis on the immanental sphere of religion eventually rendered Protestantism more vulnerable to the cultural ethos of the time. Immanence was vulnerable to being informed and interpreted by the changing spirit of the times. Second, evangelical pietism eventually contributed to the disconnection of Protestant religion from its ecclesial roots. As times changed, the essence of religion increasingly came to be viewed as an individual experience, quite distinct from church membership. As such, mainstream nineteenth century America was given an experiential religion only remotely connected to the church. The focus of this religion was individualistic in an individualistic age. The Baptist answer to Puritan "fixity" was ecclesial separatism, but it was a separation that rested on a substantial experiential difference between the saints and the world, this was its weakness. While religious experience served an ecclesiological need, it was a first step toward the isolation of religious experience (and eventually its abstraction) from a strictly ecclesial setting. In time, this Baptist-evangelical turn to the work of God in the soul (immanence), which once served ecclesial separation from the world, became the very thing that laid the groundwork for a new religion-world fusion in a new era enamored with anthropocentric-social change.

Conclusion

"Fixity"

The Baptist reformation of church, society and religion was in tension with "fixity" because (1) it argued Christianity was to be no more than a separate spiritual body; (2) because Christ did not deputize the state with spiritual power. Therefore, society must be allowed to be pluralistic, void of overarching religious definitions [i.e., secularized]. The state must be limited to civil affairs; and (3) because they insisted religion was a matter of the heart and conscience involving a free response to the sword of the spirit. Coercion (the sword of the state) in matters religious, was antithetical to true religion and conscience.

A propensity toward "fixity," although chastened and weakened, has lived on in some Baptist circles because of the influence of converted Congregationalists who

brought with them ideas of a minimally "Christian" republic [cf Isaac Backus, Chapter Three].

The Baptist answer to English Erastian and Puritan establishments laid the foundation for a problematic church-world dualism. How the Baptists conceived Christianity's separation from world was in part flawed.

"Freedom"

While Baptists did not reformulate their understanding of Christianity in reaction to a situation in which the church was idealistically attached to a socio-political project, their reformulation is related negatively and positively to the rise of that eventuality. This is evident by reviewing the five corollaries of freedom discussed in the earlier chapter.

(1) Absolute individualism: As shown, early Baptists had no view of the individual as possessing inherent rights and liberties. The individual was viewed inside a theological and religious community framework. The so-called liberties of republican governance were necessary to ensure the integrity of these frameworks. Even so, the arguments for liberty (at the time of the Revolution) from some Baptists such as John Leland, are in many respects the same as those of the Founding Fathers'. Many Baptists had shed too much of the Puritan pessimism of human nature and viewed republican liberty as a plant from heaven which would surely bare only good fruit. This is less a matter of Enlightenment idealism than benign naivete.

(2) Reason and experience: Baptists did not develop with an emphasis on learning and rationality. Rather, it was fitness of the spirit and the accessibility of the Bible to every person for which they are known. As such, they resisted the corrosive effects of Enlightenment rationalism on Christian distinctives. Their emphasis on heart religion and new birth experience does however form a point of contact with the nineteenth century shift of religion which became more immanental, anthropocentric and preoccupied with change and fruit. As shown, this emphasis formed the main bridge which connected Enlightenment humanism and Protestant evangelicalism.

(3) Virtue: Baptists remained committed to piety as the source of virtue, but their commitment to republican government predisposed them to view piety as the complement to liberalism.

(4) Pluralism and secularism: As shown in the previous discussions, Baptists

emerged with roots which were both naively optimistic about society organized this way [i.e., Leland] and marginally pessimistic [i.e., Backus].

(5) Progress: Baptists did not view the creation of modern society in idealistic terms. The political organization of the state was only to restrain evil and guarantee liberties, not to create an ideal society. As a result, Baptists developed with the resources to resist becoming too closely and idealistically attached to a so-called national dream. But at the same time, they could be prone to be naively complacent about the career of Enlightenment freedom. Their historical experience was with the abuse of religio-political power and the absence of liberty. They assumed that when power was reformed, social civility would be more or less automatic. They were the religious complement to the political radicals whose chief polemic was against political "tyranny" with the proviso that the Baptists did not share the underlying humanism and nationalism of the Jeffersonians.

Endnotes

1. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), xxii.

2. Ibid., xvi-xvii.

3. Quoted in William R. Estep, *Revolution Within the Revolution: The First Amendment in Historical Context*, 1612-1789, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 79. This limitation, *"only in civill things,"* first recorded in the above cited social contract was taken up into a colonial charter gained by Williams in 1644 and, upon the execution of Charles the First, was renegotiated by Williams' contemporary, the Baptist physician/pastor of Newport (Rhode Island), A. John Clark. This charter more fully expanded the implications of Williams' "in civill things only," and it lasted for over a century, although not long after the death of Williams, there were changes put in place that compromised the full equality of Jews and Catholics, changes that were clearly in tension with Williams' and Clark's explicit will. See also Edwin Gaustad, *Liberty of Conscience: Roger Williams in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991); and Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States* (New York: Harper, 1950).

4. "The practice of infant baptism is also an open political problem connected with the form of the church in its particular society. Infant baptism is without any doubt the basic pillar of the *corpus christianum*, the 'Christian society' which acknowledges--or at least does not reject--Christianity in the widest sense of the word as its tradition. Infant baptism is the foundation of a national church. Through it 'Christian society' regenerates itself in the bond that links one generation to another. Anyone who affirms infant baptism for whatever theological reason, thereby affirms at the same time this public form of the church, or Christianity. Anyone who condemns it, for whatever theological reason, must also have in mind and want another social form for the church. A change of baptismal practice without a change in the public form and function of the church in society is not possible." Jurgen

Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 229. On the implications of the Baptists' claims for New England Puritanism, William G. McLoughlin writes: "the rejection of infant Baptism was not only a threat to orthodoxy and to the orderly constitution of church, but it was also a threat to the social order and the ruling elite within it." McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 42. "The question of Baptism reached not only to the heart of the true form of church polity but also to the church's relationship to the State. It challenged the very structure and purpose of the Puritan social and political order." McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 7.

5. "For the subsequent history of what became the United States, Roger Williams possesses one indubitable importance, that he stands at the beginning of it. Just as some experience in the youth of a person is ever afterward a determinant of his personality, so the American character has inevitably been molded by the fact that in the first years of colonization there arose this prophet of religious liberty." Perry Miller, *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition* (New York: Athenaeum, 1962), 254, quoted in Estep, *Revolution Within the Revolution*, 80.

6. W. R. Estep, Jr., "Anabaptists and the Rise of English Baptists," *Historical Perspectives* (Historical Commission, Southern Baptist Convention Service Agency, Nov.-Dec. 1968).

7. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, English Baptist ideas were born in Holland. In the second decade they made their fledgling stand in England. During that decade, they both organized congregations on the principles outlined here and published their arguments for political reform and ecclesiastical and religious liberty. Their publications include the following: Thomas Helwys' "A Short Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity" (1612), Leonard Busher's "Religious Plea" (1614, John Murton's "Objections Answered" (1615), and "A Humble Supplication" (1620).

8. "Helwys, *Mistery of Iniquity* [:] 'The first of its four parts (pp. 1-36) characterizes Roman Catholicism as the first 'beast' of Rev. XIII, in whom has been fulfilled 'the mistery of iniquity' named in 2 Thess. 2:7, *viz.*, the use and abuse of temporal power by a religion thereby proving its own falsity.' (Anglicanism he considers the second beast.)" H. Wheeler Robinson, introduction to Thomas Helwys, *The Mister of Iniquity* (Bapt. Hist. Soc., Kingsgate Press, 1935), v, quoted in James D. Mosteller, "The Free Exercise of Religion: A Historical Baptist View," Paper presented at the Religious Liberty Conference, Calvary Baptist Church, Washington DC, 7 October 1964.

9. Cf. Ephesians, Chapter 6, Verses 17.

10. As the Baptist historian, William R. Estep pointed out, the coercion of conscience is polemicized by early Baptists. Writing about Roger Williams and quoting him, Estep makes the following claim:

> "At the heart of Williams' view of both the church and the nature of Christian faith was his insistence that faith cannot be coerced. This is a recurring theme throughout all Williams' works:
>
> > "Can the sword of steel or arm of flesh make man faithful or loyal to God? Or careth God for the outward loyalty or faithfulness, when the inward man is false and treacherous? Or is there not more danger from a hypocrite, a dissembler, a turncoat in his religion (from the fear or favor of men) than from a resolved Jew, Turk, or papist, who holds firm unto his principles?

"Speaking as a Calvinist to Calvinists, Williams drove his point home by reminding his readers that faith itself is a gift of God and not subject to the coercion of men: 'Faith is that gift which proceeds alone from the Father of lights, and till he please to make his light arise and open the eyes of blind sinners, their souls shall lie fast asleep--and the faster, in that a sword of steel compels them to a worship in hypocrisy.'" Estep, *Revolution Within the Revolution*, 81-82.

"Christ will have no man's life touched for his cause. If the Samaritans will not receive him he passeth by them. If the Gadarenes pray him to depart he leaves them. If any refuse to receive his disciples he only bids them shake off the dust of their feet for a witness against them. Here is no sword of justice at all required or permitted to smite any for refusing Christ. Then let not our Lord the King suffer his sword of justice... to be used to rule and keep in obedience the people of God and the King of the laws, statutes and ordinances of Christ which appertain to the well governing and ruling of the Kingdom of Christ... the sword of whose Kingdom is spiritual, by the power of which sword only, Christ's subjects are to be ruled and kept in obedience to him. By the which sword our Lord the King must be kept in obedience himself, if he be a disciple of Christ and a subject of Christ's Kingdom. And this takes away (without gainsaying) all the kingly power and authority of our Lord the King in the Kingdom of Christ for he cannot be both a King and a subject in one and the same kingdom." Thomas Helwys, *Mister of Iniquity*, quoted in Mosteller, "The Free Exercise of Religion," 6.

See also Roger Williams' *Bloudy Tenet of Persecution for the Cause of Conscience Discussed in a Conference Between Truth and Peace*, reprinted in part in George C. Bedell, Leo Sandon, Jr., and Charles T. Wellborn, *Religion in America*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1975) 103-107.

11. "His [Roger Williams'] great passion was the purity and independence of the church from all outside political influences, being convinced that the union of civil and secular power could only result in destroying the church." Bedell, et al, *Religion in America,* 101. See also Mosteller on Thomas Helwys' *Mistery of Iniquity*, written around 1612. Mosteller, "Free Exercise of Religion," 5.

12. As McLoughlin points out, the New England Congregationalists were quick to misjudge Baptists as Anabaptists or Quaker types who more consistently gathered on the basis of inner piety, severing the church's tie with objective truth. In elevating belief/piety, Baptists did not sever the objective ground of the church. See McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 3, 29-31. Writing about the character of the free churches within which he includes but qualifies Baptists, Ernst Troeltsch writes, "As a system, therefore, it [the free church development] represented a subjective and relative form of religion, which indeed only meant the renunciation of that earthly authority which possesses and promotes the extension of absolute Truth... This meant that the question of church membership now became a matter of individual choice, and that, at least outwardly, the form of church-order becomes that of a voluntary association, even although theologically the community which thus comes into being may still continue to be considered as an objective, ecclesiastical institution." Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, Vol. II, trans. Olive Wyon (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1931), 657.

13. Ibid., 658.

14. Ibid.

15. Edwin S. Gaustad, *Liberty of Conscience: Roger Williams in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 207-208.

16. See William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 30.

17. Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 657.

18. Ibid. See also Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 3rd ed. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1963), 255.

19. Robin Lovin, "Social Contract or Public Covenant," chap. in *Religion and American Public Life*, ed. Robin Lovin (Mahwah, New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 135.

20. Anabaptist ideas of church and state separation, which precede English Baptist ideas and to whom they owe a limited debt, are based on a more consistent church-world dualism. The Anabaptists truly did "wash their hands" from what they deemed an evil world and its institutions refusing to hold office, take oaths, or bear arms. Most telling, their ecclesiology required no reform in political governance.

21.Estep correctly states, "Williams derived the concept of a secular state from his ecclesiology, not the other way around." Estep, *Revolution Within a Revolution*, 81. That at Providence Williams commenced a positive application of his logic regarding the sanctity of the religious realm (that sphere that pertained to the first four commandments) is evidenced by a defense of a certain woman's prerogative to choose to attend church against her husband's will backed by physical abuse. The governance of the community was enlisted to insure her right to attend services, because to allow her husband to interrupt her will would be to suffer humans to trespass in the realm that belongs to God alone. The incident may be found in H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 130. Leo Pfeffer documents Williams' political logic as it relates to the two tables of the Ten Commandments. Leo Pfeffer, *Church, State and Freedom*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 84-87. In all toll, there were four basic levels of argument employed for limiting political power to a civil jurisdiction by primitive Baptists. They are theological; civil power trespassing into Christ's bound, i.e. religious/spiritual; ecclesiastical, the welfare of the church--its purity as discussed, i.e. "regenerate believers," anthropological; coercion, violated an elemental human principle--the sanctity of "conscience" dealing with inner conviction, volition, suasion; social/historical; experience had taught that forced uniformity and conformity created persecution and social terror division.

22. Pfeffer, *Church, State and Freedom*, 84-87. See also Williams, *Bloody Tenet of Persecution*, 103-107; and Mosteller, "Free Exercise of Religion."

23. As Troeltsch points out, Baptists of English derivation did not lose the Protestant sense of calling. Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 2:707-708. But what did occur was the transformation of calling from social building to a more consistent emphasis on personal Evangelism.

24. Roger Williams, *Bloody Tenet of Persecution.*

25. Ernst Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 2:656.

26. The Baptist emphasis on the sanctity of individual conscience; which occurs from the very beginning of their witness, was always vulnerable to underwriting individualism. While early Baptists labored to set the individual within a larger framework of God and

church/community, the appeal to a resident anthropological assessment concluding the soul's freedom in matters of religion is present, and as such vulnerable to being eventually abstracted to become a socio-cultural norm. In other words, because of what humanity is by nature, liberty regarding religion should be guaranteed. This is evident in the classic work by the E.D. Mullins, who, while extrapolating in Chapter One on the first "axiom of religion," God's right and freedom to sovereignty does not clearly correlate as the basis of his second axiom--the human right to be in direct relationship to God. He tends to ground this right in creation and natural arguments elevating humans religious capacity for communion with God. At this level there exist no fundamental difference with the American Enlightenment arguments , arguments that contribute to the problem of individualism. See E.D. Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion: A New Interpretation of the Baptist Faith* (Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland Press, 1908), 92.

27.William G. McLoughlin, ed., *The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology*, (Harper & Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1968).

28.Referring to both the early Baptist and New England Puritans, McLoughlin writes that they "had much in common. Both thoroughly Calvinistic, both anti-prelatical, both congregational in polity, both claimed to *believe that the primitive church consisted only of gathered, professed, visible believers*." [Italics added.] McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 28. The difference was that the Baptist were more consistent with this principle, urging that it disallowed infant Baptism and the presence of conversion/regeneration in an adult who confessed faith.

29.Estep, *Revolution Within a Revolution*, 98.

30. Ibid., 102.

31. William G. McLoughlin, ed., *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism: Pamphlets 1754-1789*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap, 1968), 422.

32.Estep, *Revolution Within a Revolution*, 102.

33.McLoughlin, ed., *Isaac Backus*, 437.

34. Ibid., 47

35. Ibid., 48

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., 55

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 424; Estep, *Revolution Within a Revolution*, 100-102.

40. McLoughlin, Intro to *Isaac Backus.*

41. Mc.Loughlin, e., *Isaac Backus, 151, 155.*

42. Ibid., 315

43. Ibid., 313

44. Ibid., 48

45. See Richard Carwardine, "Pietist Withdrawal" in *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (Yale University Press, 1993), p. 14.

46. Johann Baptist Metz, *The Emergent Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

47. McLoughlin, p. 37. Isaac Backus on Church State and Calvinism, Pamphlets 1754-1789.

48.Stanley Grenz, "Sweet Harmony: Isaac Backus and His Vision of Church-State Relationships," *Report from the Capital* (Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, March, 1985). *"The Writings of Elder John Leland*, ed. L.F. Greene (New York, 1845) , 561-570.

49. James E. Wood, Jr., E. Bruce Thompson, and Robert T. Miller, *Church and State in Scripture History and Constitutional Law* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press), 76.

50. McLoughlin, *American Evangelicals,* 12.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

In Tension With "Freedom":
The Neo Evangelical Movement In Modern America

When studied in light of this thesis, neo-evangelism may be understood in partial contrast to two other Protestant movements of this century which have already been discussed - liberalism and the fundamentalist driven Religious Right. Both of these movements viewed the development of America [understood as a national entity or a modern socio-cultural entity] and Christianity [or some part of Christianity] within a unitary frame of reference. The nature of this unity was of course not ecclesiastical, as in colonial times, but religious. Liberalism believed that particular religio-moral values of Christianity could be harmoniously integrated with modern culture. No fundamental challenge to the underlying *premises* of modernity was required. What modernity needed was religious depth. Liberalism was confident that Christianity, properly understood and formed, provided this need. In this way, they envisioned the Christianization of America.

The child of fundamentalism, the Religious Right, also believed in a Christian America. However, its strategy to effect this identity was not "integrative" but regulative. It refused to allow America to exercise its freedom outside the pale of "Christian" values. At least this was its aim. This required accessing the political means to control society's moral boundaries and it required fundamentalists to construe Christian values and truth in an absolute and authoritative manner.

In liberalism's model, modern society organized around freedom is "saved" because the individuals that make up that society and the culture that is developed from the collective life of society absorb and incarnate Christian values and morals. Christianity, in this view, can be harmoniously woven into the fabric of modern society and its liberal principles. The Religious Right "saves" modern society, not by empowering freedom "from below," but by marking the socio-moral limits of freedom. The exercise of freedom outside these limits is not Christian and lacks socio-moral integrity. Society as such has no moral foundation.

As already argued, a society organized around modern freedom creates conditions and fosters an ethos which tempt and pressure Christian constituencies to either of the above postures. Furthermore, the propensity of Protestantism in America

to relate to the republic from a unitary frame of reference [i.e., as a "Christian" republic] has deep historical roots. The question with regard to neo-evangelicalism is whether or not it is formulated in such a way as to remain properly differentiated from modern America. Neo-evangelicalism is a partially new construction of Christianity. Implicitly (or explicitly), this construction contains within it the nature of neo-evangelicalism's social relevance. In other words, the question behind this chapter is whether evangelicalism is constructed in such a way as to render it vulnerable to either of the religious and cultural forces ("right" or "left") which are seeking to wed the Christian religion to the "needs," goals or values of modern society. Is neo-evangelicalism formulated in such a way as to escape being coopted either in a regulative or integrative strategy and yet not end up embracing a church-world separation? Is its make-up such that it is able to counter the historical inertia and cultural pull toward an uncritical identity with modern society. Fundamentally, this is a question about the sources of neo-evangelicalism differentiation.

The chapter begins by showing that neo-evangelicalism emerged as a centrist movement. This fact is significant for understanding it. Following this historical review, the chapter proceeds to enquire more concretely how neo-evangelicalism attempted to establish its centrist position. In the concluding discussion of the chapter, neo-evangelicalism's positions are evaluated in light of the problem of identification and "fixity" and "freedom."

Neo-evangelicalism began to come into *self conscious* existence in the 1940's. The NAE (National Association of Evangelicals) was founded in 1942. The movement occurred after liberalism had crested but before the religious right was formed. The fact that liberalism's power was on the wane, encouraged, if it did not open the door for, a new evangelical response to modernity. In hindsight, it is predictable that in America an "evangelical" response to modernity would come from more historic American traditional evangelical sources that were moderately to the right than from a disenchanted left (as in Europe).

While "neo orthodoxy" [so called], contained a far more penetrating critique of modernity, it originated more directly from Europe and was more singularly located in academic circles.[1] It was not and did not become a grassroots movement involving the local churches and laity. Protestantism's domination of America after the birth of the nation, was not due to the existence of the staid old-line Protestant churches, but

rather because of those sects that were both more friendly to and instruments of revivalism (the Baptists, Methodists, Disciples and the more passionate evangelical Presbyterians). If Protestantism was going to reclaim a healthy tension with modernity in America, it would almost surely have to develop out of the offspring of that more historic popular evangelical constituency which had become central in Antebellum America. When neo-evangelicalism began to distinguish itself, its "evangelical" platform was such that it appealed to popular American Protestantism. Its claims were simple, direct, accessible and Christ centered.

In order to properly assess evangelicalism's attempt to place Christianity in a new relation to modernity, it is important to review the fundamentalist roots of the movement. One of the most dramatic features of the American religious scene in the twentieth century was the division of Protestantism in the beginning decades of this century. The relative harmony in spiritual temper and belief that characterized antebellum Protestantism, gave place to three antagonistic forces. The idealism of society, organized around democratic freedom and liberty penetrated a Protestantism already extended as a public religion, pulling it more consistently into its goals, premises, and this-world optimism. In response to this "liberal" development of Protestantism, fundamentalism emerged. Over against adaptation to modernity, it called for the conservation and protection of the past. While its main preoccupation was doctrinal and biblical, it was also on a path that would lead it into a more separatistic posture, away from both the modern world and the other mainline churches.

By the third decade of the twentieth century, much of American Protestantism had been rearranged. Unable to capture the bases of institutional power, the "fundamentalists" voted with their feet, more or less leaving the mainline denominations to their liberal destiny. It is precisely in this exodus that a new dimension of fundamentalism came into existence. Their mission evolved beyond that of "conservers" and "defenders" of the faith, to a call for separateness. "Come out from among them and be separate" (Rev 13) became their watchword. Separate schools, separate mission agencies, separate seminaries, churches, denominations and printing houses were put in place.

As this posture of being "in defense of" and "separate from" became institutionalized, it began to be reflected in almost every aspect of fundamentalism's

life and faith. Pre-millennialism found in fundamentalism a ready soil, oriented away from the transformation of this world toward rapture to another. Saving souls from both the world and the corrupted churches, largely defined their mission. The gains of science in any area that called into question classic Christian assumptions were rejected outright. These included scientific theories about origins (Darwin), about the human condition (Freud), about the historical and literary conditioning of the Bible, and others. With few exceptions, they insulated themselves from the positive achievements within culture, in music, theater and the other fine arts, as well as certain areas of literature.

Between 1950 and 1970, evangelicalism emerged from fundamentalism to take a self-consciously distinctive place in the American religious scene. From a distance, it may appear that American evangelicalism emerged as an inevitable centrist phenomenon, mediating a position between the two extreme poles of liberalism and fundamentalism.[2] While there is an element of truth to this, it is not helpful in understanding the precise dynamics that have attempted to take form in the development of neo-evangelicalism. Over against the posture of its fundamentalist progeny of "in defense of" and "separate from," evangelicalism emerged in search of a more offensive and inclusive posture. It is these "new" kind of dynamics that are the primitive impulses of twentieth century evangelicalism. Only in light of the fundamentalist background from which evangelicalism consciously sought to distinguish itself, can the spirit and distinctive character of this movement be fully understood or appreciated.

The turn of events which mark the self-conscious emergence of modern American evangelicalism, all clearly bear the presence of this "new" dynamic that may be generally described as inclusive and offensive [note neo-evangelicals were offensive in that they abandoned a fundamentalist dogmatic assertive style for a more apologetic style]. They were anxious to argue and debate their position with the opposition. The organization of the National Association of Evangelicals (1947, 1948), the opening of Fuller Theological Seminary (1947), as well as Billy Graham's open break with separatist fundamentalist ideology (around 1950), compose three early and highly significant occurrences that explicitly bear the presence of this more offensive and inclusive style.

In hindsight, it is clear that no one player or set of players in this emerging

phenomenon fully understood the implications of the new directions. Once the spirit of this new dynamic was released, it proved to be greater than any one institution or significant personality to harness or define. George Marsden's work, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, made clear the way that Fuller Theological Seminary, more than any of its peer evangelical institutions, captured the spirit of the new direction. From1950 onward, Fuller took a number of decisive steps away from the fundamentalists' exclusivist defensive posture. It released the gospel from many fundamentalist and sectarian trappings. Personal ethics, having to do with taboos on dancing, alcohol, theater, cinema, went by the wayside. Over against the myopic concern for personal salvation to the exclusion of social transformation, Fuller came to argue for a thoroughly offensive engagement with the structures of suffering, evil and oppression in this world. Dispensationalism (with its otherworldly focus), a well-established article of faith in fundamentalist circles, came first to be optionalized and then doctrinally refuted as a perversion of the New Testament gospel. A theological dialogue was opened with science in a number of areas, such as evolution and psychology, areas anathematized and polemicized by the fundamentalists. An openness to culture and the positive achievements in music, arts and literature were affirmed.

Not least among these has been Fuller's struggle to distinguish what is and what is not authoritative in the Bible, calling forth anathemas from other evangelicals and fundamentalists. These movements toward greater openness are by no means the monopoly of Fuller. They signify currents and changes throughout evangelicalism over its modern forty-year history. In fact, they bear the presence of a "new" direction toward a more offensive inclusivist posture, where fewer and fewer religious distinctives are inside the non-negotiable center, and more and more are relativized to the circumference or judged to be purely of a parochial or of a culturally-conditioned character, possessing no intrinsic relation to the Christian message.

Only progressively did this new spirit take on a self-conscious form under the description "evangelical." Its history is clearly evolutionary in character. Just as self-conscious individuated persons are not born in a day but emerge through a series of events and decisions that serve to form them, evangelicalism similarly "developed." While this offensive inclusivistic dynamic is clearly present, it is often shrouded in a degree of ambivalence. This is so, because it has never fully been sure where its

"fundamentalism" ends and its "evangelicalism" begins. Modern evangelicalism has always carried within it the general theological moorings of fundamentalism, while at the same time it has attempted to step to a different beat.

Nineteenth century evangelicalism and twentieth century evangelicalism are not the same. Historically, nineteenth century evangelicalism represented a broad protestant mainline consensus centering on classic protestant orthodoxy with its preeminence around the gospel of free grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This was distinctly cast in the mold of the eighteenth - and nineteenth century awakenings, in which decision and an empirical Christian experience tended to be uniquely informed and more or less absolutized.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the centrist character of evangelicalism seemed to be allowing for more diversity at the circumference. Some patterns of early modernism sought to build liberalizing theologies out of an "evangelical Christocentric empiricism." However, for the most part, this broad, tolerant, cohesive evangelicalism suffered badly in the fundamentalism- modernist controversy. While it is not accurate to say that nineteenth century evangelicalism was extinguished at the turn of the century schism, it is a fair assessment that its broad cohesive base splintered. Only a few denominational structures kept this spirit alive.

Self-conscious twentieth century neo-evangelicalism returned to this term "evangelical." Perhaps it is more historically accurate to say they came to isolate it, and identify themselves definitively by it. However, in doing so, they did not simply pick up where nineteenth century evangelicalism had evolved, but brought to it the needs of the new situation created by fundamentalism.

While the general character of nineteenth century evangelicalism exists in the new twentieth century evangelicalism, it is not precisely identifiable. The new historical situation in the twentieth century altered it. Contemporary evangelicals rightly argued, in concert with their nineteenth century heritage, that Christianity does not necessitate this defensive separatistic posture of fundamentalism. But in attempting to loosen the grip of these rear guard dynamics, evangelicals were thrust into a new tension between fundamentalist separatism and liberalism's problematic openness. Evangelicals historically sought to meet the challenge of the new tension they stepped into, through the resources inherent in a nineteenth century American evangelicalism. However, this attempt has only been partly successful. New

situations make old truth uncouth.

Evangelicalism has been hard put to remember that nineteenth century evangelicalism either hardened into fundamentalism or became uncritically involved in modernism. Fundamentalism survived modernism by employing separatism, exclusivity and defensive intransigence, and intensifying biblical-dogmatic authority. Ostensibly, neo-evangelicalism sought to moderate this image and enter upon a course of greater openness and dialogue, with modernity and liberalism embracing only what they believed to be distinctly "evangelical."

But in this approach what was to ensure that the new "evangelical" freedom would not overflow the threshold of its constituting difference, that distinction which was needed to maintain a clear identity? What could ensure that the determinants needed for internal cohesion, calling and "mission" would not come unraveled through an increasingly open posture? Or on the other hand, because of the threat of dissolution, what would prevent a lapse back into a defensive fundamentalist intransigence and separatism from the world and other churches?[3]

The Dynamics That Neo-Evangelicalism Employed in its Attempt To Negotiate a Path Between the Problematic Closeness of Fundamentalism and the Uncritical Openness of Liberalism

In its short history, the new evangelicalism has had within it a number of predispositions that have influenced this tension, albeit with ambiguous results. These may be described as pragmatism reductionism and evangelistic empiricism.

Pragmatism

In so far as pragmatism is the willingness to allow certain external pressures and circumstances to have a degree of influence on the expression and witness of truth, it appears to have a limited but definite influence in the history of the new evangelicalism.

George Marsden's work, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, brings to light that the early Fuller group carefully selected its positions and statements so as not to offend the sensibilities of its more fundamentalist constituency. It is not as if these pioneers were bravely following a new creative impulse of the gospel into an unknown world. They appeared to be more like a nervous thief who makes his way with eyes flashing

right and left. On the right was a more fundamentalist constituency that buttered their bread. On the left was the plague called modernism or liberalism, with which they could ill afford or imagine themselves as being in their company.

Many of the institutions that gave form to the "new" evangelicalism, grew outside the pale of denominational structures. It is this phenomenon that allowed the degree of freedom and movement they needed to take on their own unique character and interests. Denominations obviously have their own interests and historical distinctiveness to care for. While the new evangelical coalitions attempted to construct bases that transcended these denominational particularities, they were constantly on guard so as to keep themselves in good stead with the various church organizations. It was from them that they drew the largest share of their support on a person-to-person basis. Moreover, it was in part through the good will of these denominations, that their ministries gained their influence. The breadth of this kind of constituency necessitated careful (often calculated) moves. The new evangelical sympathies were coming basically from a conservative to moderately conservative sector of Protestantism. At the same time, evangelicalism was attempting, with increasing success, to revitalize mainline churches with the old familiar gospel that had fallen on hard times. Many of those in these institutions recognized that within the new evangelicalism, aspects of the old fundamentalists' spirit were still alive.

All of these factors exerted on evangelicalism a strong element of pragmatism or "practicality" that served to moderate both the degree of closedness and openness it confessed. Even so, it should be noted that as the new evangelical institutions have grown stronger in influence and financial independence, the extent of this pragmatic element seems to have decreased. In hindsight, it seems inevitable that in the fledgling transdenominational context of evangelicalism's modern revival recourse to this kind of pragmatic approach would occur. It might even be said that, for a season, it helped enable evangelicalism maintain the positive tension between openness and closedness. But it is just as true that the presence of this element of pragmatism, could only hinder evangelicalism from finding within itself the resources for a creative stasis (over against the rather arbitrary rigid intransigence of fundamentalism). Or it could also hinder evangelicalism from achieving an informed openness (over against the more unconditionally open posture of the mainline

churches who were increasingly experiencing a crisis of identity and meaningful content).

Reductionism and Rationalism

A second force that exerted an influence on this tension between the uncritical openness of liberalism and the problematic "closedness" of fundamentalism, was the attempt at an evangelical reductionism of Christianity. Theoretically speaking, the circumscription of the essential defining elements of Christianity served to widen or "universalize" its scope. This definition included primarily three articles: the authority of scripture, orthodoxy, and the necessity of a born again experience. The last of these will be discussed under the next sub-heading.

Neo-evangelicalism concluded that if the church was not to slip into the grip of modernity's premises and values, the integrity of the authority of scripture must be maintained. Rationalism, critically applied to scripture, had made it pliable to modernity's values and world view. Securing the scripture's authority was crucial, and the way neo-evangelicalism went about securing this authority reveals the extent to which they themselves were captive to modernity. Neo-evangelicalism was not comfortable being in the modern world on their own terms, i.e. confessionally.

Following the legacy of men like Charles Hodge, Benjamin Warfield, Cornelius Van til, Edward Meachan, Edward Carnel and Carl Henry re-opened the theological attempt to derive the veracity of scriptural authority and Protestant orthodoxy from warrants that were implicitly rational. Alister McGrath, agreeing with Donald Bloesch, writes, "In the end, Henry risks making an implicit appeal to a more fundamental foundation (i.e. 'logically consistent divine revelation') in his affirmation of the authority of scripture", leading to the conclusion that "the authority of scripture itself is derived from this more fundamental authority". He goes on to recall the similarity of this effort to Princeton's historic "confidence in the capacity of reason to judge the truth of revelation". Finally, he asks, "whose rationality provides the basis of scriptural authority?".[4]

George Marsden has shown that modern evangelicalism is unmistakably linked with a history that is connected in an unbroken line to the early decades of the republic when Protestantism triumphed over the Enlightenment radicals ("infidels"), by itself appropriating a non-skeptical strain of Enlightenment thought, the Scottish school of common sense.[5] It was in conflict with "extreme rationalism" that

rationalism infected American Protestantism.

While it is true that modern evangelicalism's more rational apologetic commenced with a preset doctrinal agenda, it nonetheless reveals the extent to which evangelicalism was reacting to and "talking" to modernity, rather than confessing its faith to the world. In other words, neo-evangelicalism had not found an informing basis for the church which allowed it to be in the modern world in a non-anxious confessional "witnessing" posture. Lacking an evangelical epistemology, it was burdened by a rationalistic tendency (if not a rationalistic epistemology).

In the end, the existence of this element is one factor that subverted the possibility of Protestantism being in the world on its own differentiated basis. Evangelicalism's view of Biblical authority rendered it vulnerable to the Religious Right. It was because evangelicals insisted that the authority of scripture as evenly resided in the whole of scripture, and not primarily in its role of providing an evangelical witness, that their position lent itself to the Right's claim that the Bible provided individuals and society with a source for religio-moral absolutes in an age of relativism. Moreover, to the degree that this authority could be linked to rationality, its normativeness within human society could be urged and established by appeal to universal canons of thought, so called. Evangelicals' view of truth poses a similar problem.

In neo-evangelicalism's formative years, no two figures had a greater theological influence than Henry and Carnel. The direction they established defined the course of the movement in its early period. Both were intensely apologetic in their approach to theology. Henry was particularly devoted to the idea that the truth of divine revelation must be translated into propositional form. Truth, he insisted, could be given an objective propositional expression which could be apprehended through the faculty of reason.[6] Ray S. Anderson points out the reason behind this theological approach. Henry's "analysis of the contemporary situation is that the modern mind has succumbed to relativism with a loss of absolutes in moral values and of certainty with regards to truth."[7] For Henry, "Christian faith must be rationally defensible in terms of the criteria by which all truth is verified. Otherwise claims of faith fall back on the slippery slope of existential and subjective experience with no basis of certainty."[8]

Henry's theological-conceptual basis for demonstrating the veracity of truth may be simply stated as follows: he employed the Aristotelian law of non-

contradiction as a measurement of truth; by employing philosophical presuppositions, he sought to establish the integrity of doctrinal truth. As Anderson points out, Henry transmuted the God of the Bible into a philosophical theistic principle. The logic inherent in this principle was that God had revealed the truths which determine *all* rational knowledge and make it certain.[9] Divine revelation is the source of all truth, reason is the instrument for recognition and logical consistency is the test of truth.[10] Anderson goes so far as to claim that Henry insisted "... that human reason can grasp and even validate divine revelation apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and the presence of faith.[11] Donald Bloesch, an evangelical who shows an appreciation for Barth, writes that Henry's and Clark's theological method is fundamentally deductive, in that they attempt to derive the veracity of truth from rational principles.[12]

George Lindbeck noted that evangelicalism's idea of truth betrayed a "voluntarist intellectualist and literalist" mentality which arose out of "unusual insecurity and naivete." Anderson, who stands within the evangelical community, makes a similar claim. He writes that "Henry's theology is a response to the contemporary craving for stability and certainty."[13] "Authority is the key issue for evangelical theology. Authority must be grounded in absolute certainty, must be logically verifiable and rationally accessible to every person."[14]

Evangelistic Empiricism

One of the major events involved in the cleavage within fundamentalism which led to modern evangelicalism, was Billy Graham's decision to break with separatist ideology. Like his eighteenth - and nineteenth - century prototypes, Graham made distinctions between what was essential and what was peripheral. By following the tradition of placing the gospel of Grace through Christ by faith in the center (and relativizing everything else), he was able to extend the boundaries of his ministry beyond the division between Catholicism and Protestantism. Graham's ministry, along with a host of lesser lights with the same spirit, have reminded American Christians of the legacy that nineteenth century Protestantism had largely come to affirm, namely, the things that Christians hold in common are far more significant than the things that separate them. Putting a few central articles inside the "non-negotiable" center, Graham's ministry played a significant role in forming a transdenominational evangelical consensus with a more offensive open and inclusive

posture.

However, Graham's ministry in particular and the evangelism of evangelicals in general, while breaking down certain barriers, have raised others. Building on the tradition of eighteenth and nineteenth century evangelicalism, these new players have come to place an increasing weight of emphasis on both the individual's decision of faith and an empirical experience of conversion (new birth). In many spheres of the new evangelicalism, the business of repenting, believing, praying the "sinner's prayer," the opening of one's heart to let Jesus come in, and the changed life, have tended to become standardized and absolutized. In this view, there are only two groups: those who have been transformed through a certain prototypical evangelical crisis experience and those who have not. By standardizing and absolutizing this salvation equation, the new evangelicalism has opened itself to the critique of introducing into the church and world a new separatism organized around a "born again" experience. In so doing, it has subtly shifted the terms of exclusivity to the more difficult and elusive realm of decision and experience. The effect of this shift is to replace Protestant sectarianism with an evangelical "universalism" that derives its definition in part from subjective experiential change.

One of the problems inherent in evangelicalism's emphasis on an individual's empirical religious experience is that it does not contribute to a strong ecclesiology. New birth experiences can be mainstreamed so as to distinguish an individual within a large socio-cultural setting quite apart from any ecclesial solidarity. To the degree that the new birth experience is made definitive for the identity of the church, the church rests on the changed life of the saints.

As will be discussed, twentieth century neo-evangelicalism emerged with a new interest in social justice. As early as 1949, Carl Henry attempted to set a new course.[15] Over against fundamentalists who did not recognize social justice as integral to the Christian mission and in distinction from the liberal social gospel movement whose members understood Christian mission entirely in terms of social justice (or nearly so), Henry envisioned a middle course. The two positions between which he sought to mediate may be called dualistic and monistic. The fundamentalist position was basically dualistic. For fundamentalists, Christianity had no interest in the transformation of the world and its socio-political structures. Salvation was entirely an individual phenomenon. The sole mission of the church was to save souls. Insofar as

personal piety provided a godly beneficial influence on others and therefore on society at large, fundamentalists had a social ethic. The liberal position was basically monistic (to use Ken Cauthen's description). Salvation was not merely or primarily directed at changing sinful individuals. The entire socio-economic organization of society required being made Christian. As argued in Chapter Four, this view became intensely political and led to the collapse of distinction between Christian and liberal democratic goals and values.

Henry wanted to awaken in the new evangelicalism a social conscience without succumbing to the monistic consistency of the social liberals. This required making distinctions about the Church's mission. Evangelism and social justice were not optional and could not rightly be separated but they must not be identified. Evangelism addressed individuals. Through the gospel, individuals were called to faith, repentance and a new life of obedience to God. As Ronald Sider writes, "Only individuals can respond to this Good News. Hence, it is confusing nonsense to talk of evangelizing political or economic structures. Multinational corporations or political entities cannot repent, enter into a personal relationship with the Risen Jesus and become his disciple."[16]

In the early unified period of neo-evangelicalism, justice primarily, if not exclusively, meant extending compassion and help to those in the world who were suffering. The social function of the church was defined in this humanitarian sense with the intent to quicken the conscience of evangelicals toward those in need in the world. This was not an attempt to realize a Christian egalitarian value in society, but to become responsive to real needs through voluntary private and ecclesiastical initiatives. Viewed from the standpoint of the interest of this thesis, neo-evangelicalism's strength was found in its attempt to chart a road between a Christianity-world dualism and the monism of the liberal social gospel movement. The weakness in evangelicalism's position was that even though it began to reconnect to the needs and interests of society from a differentiated posture, this connection was weak and flawed. Its social conscience was fundamentally the 19th century individualistic vision of reality which H. Richard Niebuhr described as "the conviction that the human unit is the individual."[17] "The defect," writes Reinhold Niebuhr, "... is that it (i.e., the evangelical view) obscures the dual individual and social character of human selves and the individual and social character of their

virtues and vices."[18]

Neo-evangelicalism did not view humaness with sufficient social depth and it did not see in the gospel a new social model of humanity apart from transformed individuals. Therefore it had no vision of changing social structure. Part of the reason for this was that the movement consisted largely of status quo middle class Americans who lacked a critical relation to capitalism[19] as the recipients of capitalism's material blessings and enhanced freedom in lifestyle. A simple gospel confined to the individual spiritual dimension wore well with them.

In time, some evangelicals deepened their social ethic while maintaining and (in some cases) clarifying the distinctions which were original to the *spirit* of the movement. Ronald Sider, for instance, urged that evangelicals had neglected the larger organizing term for Christ's mission "Kingdom." When this term was employed, it was possible to think of the Church's mission as embracing all spheres of fallen human existence including social and economic structures.[20] He insisted, "social concern involves both relief for those suffering from social justice and also the political restructuring of society for the sake of greater social justice."[21] This however did not mean that he was departing from the medium (i.e., between monism and dualism) that evangelicals had originally attempted to negotiate as is evident from the following: "To label this increased social justice 'salvation' is however confusing. Until our Lord's return, all attempts to restructure society will at best produce only significantly less imperfect societies tragically pockmarked by the consequences of the fall."[22]

Wes Micheason and James Wallis also appeal to the Kingdom motif and polemicize the traditional individualistic evangelical view of salvation. In the following statement, they urge that neo-evangelicalism's emphasis on salvation as transformed individuals lacks critical tension with modernity's individualistic culture. The mainstream evangelical witness, they insist, fails to come to grips with the importance of the social character and historical particularity of the church which is necessary for Christianity to resist uncritical identity with the world around it.

> "... what the gospel means is itself still a very controversial question. What is the evangel? The traditional view would say that the heart of the gospel is justification by faith, the atonement, getting one's heart right with God. Then there are social implications and political responsibilities that derive from that. Others would say that the meaning of Jesus is the inauguration of a new order

> of things. Whenever you delete the coming and the meaning of the kingdom from the proclamation of the gospel, the inseparable unity between justification by faith and participation in the kingdom of God is broken. Reconciliation is required because to participate in that new order requires a change so fundamental that the apostle calls it a new birth...
>
> ... Now [i.e., in 20th century evangelicalism] the kingdom imperative is on the periphery and neglected or removed altogether so that what you have is a gospel defined by the four spiritual laws. That theology seems to me to be inherently susceptible to being used to sanction the social order the way it is."[23]

Summary

Almost as soon as modern American evangelicalism achieved self- conscious identity and distinct recognition, it has begun to come unraveled. Within the last decade, leading churchmen have been talking about the breakdown of the meaning of the word "evangelical." Within the 1970's, Richard Quebedeaux, a prominent evangelical, published two books entitled *The Young Evangelicals* and *The Worldly Evangelicals*, both of which pointed to the cleavage of a "right" and a "left" within evangelicalism. In the latter of these two books, the author's enthusiastic optimism for the "left" is much more tamed. He appears to not be so sure or enthusiastic about where evangelicals are going or who they are becoming.

Donald Blosech, a prominent long-standing evangelical scholar and author, is also concerned. In *The Future of Evangelical Christianity*, he mourns the splintering of evangelicals, while attempting to mediate a broad basis upon which unity and identity could prevail. Of course, Blosech is not without his own biases about what should go into this evangelical platform. His answer seems to come out on the historical side. Evangelicals can only make their way into the future by establishing the determinants or their identity with the past. He pleads for a "catholic" doctrinal tradition, including a rather high view of the sacraments, building on the clarification of the Reformation's insights on faith and grace.

Today, evangelicalism is having trouble finding solid common ground, ground that will enable it to make good on its promise to stand in a more offensive, dialectical posture to the world neither, problematically separated from the world nor identified with it. Its pragmatism, empiricism and rationalism will no longer suffice. Evangelicalism is being challenged to come of age. It is being driven back on itself, to see if it can draw out of its own center the resources to sustain the tension it

pretended to step into. Failure to do so, will no doubt spell its demise, at least in the highly coherent self-conscious form it has recently enjoyed.

The issue is one that is inextricably bound up with the basis upon which it attempts to secure its critical differentiation from the modern world's ethos, values, and premises. Its success at achieving this critical differentiation in principle, can be no better than the basis it has laid down to support it. As such, its present existence is in a crisis in so far as its historical defection from fundamentalism is being tested. The question is whether it was a temporary rebellion or the evolution of something that has and will show itself able to call forth new resources to negotiate a difficult but necessary tension.

Neo-evangelicalism attempted to distance itself from liberalism's problematic fusion with modernity and its relativistic premises and values. Also it attempted to distance itself from fundamentalist's problematic separatism and parallelism to the modern world and its social needs. In other words, it attempted differentiation from and connectedness to the modern world. Its strategy to accomplish differentiation was to return Christianity to the common nineteenth century evangelical beliefs: biblical authority, Christ's substitutionary work (and the cluster of doctrines that support that truth) and the requirement of a new birth experience. It sought to secure Christianity from becoming caught in the grip of modernity by tying it to a few non-negotiable distinctly Christian, i.e., evangelical beliefs. Ironically, to protect these from the corrosive effects of rationalism, they employed reason and placed a greater emphasis on the authority of the scripture. Evangelicalism's strategy to connect to the social needs in the world was to extend the Christian ethics beyond the individual to the social realm. Though this was fledgling, somewhat anemic effort, it was part of the original design of neo-evangelicalism.

Practically speaking, the question is whether the foundation that evangelicals laid to achieve differentiation and connectedness will ultimately support this tension. Will it enable them to be "in the world but not of the world?"

Even while neo-evangelicalism seemed to be succeeding in giving Protestantism an expression in tension with liberalism (and fundamentalism), it was quickly moving toward a crisis. In 1979, the Religious Right emerged building its Christian republic campaign out of religious premises that were very similar in principle to that of neo-evangelicalism. By insisting that Christian truth and values

could be verified by a common (public) source of appeal - rational thought, neo-evangelicalism unwittingly contributed to the conclusion that a basis existed to justify a "new" social role for Christianity - the regulation of public standards of morality. While Henry himself seemed to oppose the New Right, his theological principles contributed to it by construing a fundamental unity between the truth of God and the rationality of this world. As Anderson points out, for Henry "the finite and infinite are comprehended in one and the same logicality."[24]

At the end of the day, neo-evangelicalism's risked loosening the church's confessional-dialectical posture toward the world, and engendering an authoritarian posture which made it vulnerable to the assimilation into the Religious Right. Furthermore, its evangelical reductionism and empiricism do not in the end provide the church with an enduring basis to resist the corrosive effects of modernity on its distinctive Christian character. As discussed, the focus of evangelicals on individual salvation via new birth, is viewed by many as contributing to the cultural individualism that is endemic to modernism's premises. The problem, as it is most often represented by critics, is one of balance. It is not the individual experience focus per se, but the absence of a social dimension. Evangelicalism is faulted because its only answer to the individualism in society is a better converted individual empowered to practice benevolence. The problem however lies deeper than this. The salvation logic of American evangelicalism grew out of English and continental pietism. This logic did not consistently build its understanding of salvation on the foundation of a finished objective work of Christ for all humanity; a work which changed humanity's relation to God and each other. Evangelicals gave the particular individual's saving experience of Christ both a preeminent place in soteriology and a relative autonomy. The consequence of this is that no clear social description of human reality is derivable from their primary soteriological emphasis.

Although overstating the matter, Harold Bloom describes the experiential individualism as the essence of American religion. Bloom argues that modern American religion took on its distinctive experiential emphasis at the August 1801 Cane Ridge evangelical camp meeting. On that occasion, 25,000 people, mostly of Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist backgrounds, met for a week of revival. The participants engaged in what Bloom describes as "... a kind of orgiastic individualism in which all the holy rolling was the outward mark of an inward grace that

traumatically put away frontier loneliness and instead put on the doctrine of experience that exalted such loneliness into a being alone with Jesus... The American Jesus was born at Cane Ridge... He is a Jesus who barely was crucified and whose forty days of resurrection upon earth never have ended. Or if he ascended, he has come back and keeps coming back in the pouring out of spirit. He cannot be known in or through the church, but only one on one..."[25]

At the end of the day, the problem is not one of balance, but twofold: where evangelicals consistently begin their soteriological reasonings, from the objective-historical versus the subjective-experiential and what is comprehended in that objective work – an individual and social view of humanness versus an individual view of humanness. As already quoted, Wes Michaelson and James Wallis and the Niebuhr brothers reveal some perception of this problem. In Chapter Seven it will be argued that Barth provides an understanding of the gospel which clarifies both aspects of the above equation.

Viewed in relation to the presuppositions or corollaries of American freedom, neo-evangelicalism may seem in the following light:

(1) Over against the absolute individualism endemic to the modern project, neo-evangelicalism witnessed to the importance of a spiritually transformed individual; one who was empowered to be compassionate and one who was beginning to become aware of his or her social responsibility. Even so, as argued, this view did not present a potent challenge to, or liberation from, the modern individualistic ethos.

(2) Over against modernity's confidence in reason alone as the necessary epistlemological corollary to freedom, neo-evangelicalism, especially in its coherent early decades, returned to the nineteenth century hope of achieving a marriage between reason and scripture. Evangelicals resisted what seemed to them the parochiality and relativity of biblical truth caused by skeptical reason by a renaissance of rational apologetics, especially as regards the authority of scripture. This strategy made them vulnerable to the designs of the Religious Right and a loss of the differentiated relation to the world they sought to achieve.

(3) Over against the presupposition that virtue and freedom are interdependent, evangelicals emphasized the new birth. As already discussed, this view of salvation did little to bring Christianity into a creative tension with the modern ethos. Christianity as such remained complementary and supplementary to the American

way.

(4) Over against the American platform of freedom that says that individual liberty yielding a pluralistic society naturally achieves sufficient harmony and fraternity, the principles of evangelicals conclude that pluralistic harmony is achieved through new birth. Mass revivalism continues in its nineteenth century image and to a lesser degree, accomplishes a similar need for national cohesion. In addition, the insistence of evangelicals on giving the church's witness rational veracity, suggests their propensity to provide pluralistic America with a simple accessible universal basis of truth. As Ray Anderson has said, Henry believed that "... human reason can grasp and even validate divine revelation apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and the presence of faith."[26]

(5) Over against the linking of freedom and progress, unlike mainstream nineteenth century evangelicalism, modern neo-evangelicalism has been largely pre-millennial. It has not been enamoured with the prospect of the transformation of the present age. This fact may express evangelicalism's greatest tension with modernity. This position may support evangelicalism's design to not become identified with the modern socio-cultural project, but it also may do little to enable evangelicals to be creatively connected to this world.

In the end, American neo-evangelicalism combined its evangelicalism with pragmatism, rationalism, reductionism, empiricism, and social ethicism, thus creating an inadequate and flawed foundation for the restoration of the church's differentiation from the modern/post-modern world. Chapter Seven will argue that a well-formed ecclesial Christianity which is neither problematically separated from or too closely identified with the world, requires a more consistent evangelical base. Neo-evangelicalism represents, to a significant degree, the impress of a composite artifice containing elements which betray its intention. Even so, much of evangelicalism is changing. Fuller eventually began to look for a way to understand Biblical that was not so rationalistic and totalistic as their early leaders insisted.[27] Some evangelicals are talking to Yale neo-liberals and recognizing the importance of a confessional vs. a highly apologetic-rational approach to Christian truth.[28] As noted, many evangelicals have recognized that the early horizons of social justice needed expanding. Both a compassionate response to particular needs and a challenging destructive socio-political structures are required.

Endnotes

1. Winthrop S. Hudson, *American Protestantism*, ed., Daniel J. Boorstin, The Chicago History of American Civilization Series, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 173.

2. Evangelicalism as a term defining a particular sector of American Christianity has been used in a variety of ways. My use roughly conforms to Martin Marty's use in which he addresses Fundamentalists, Evangelicals, and Liberals. Geroge Marsden also makes distinctions between the twentieth century evangelical development and Fundamentalists. James D. Huner, on the other hand, has pressed for a definition encompassing a wider circumference than used here.

3. "Many would say that the old guard of evangelical theology has itself been slipping down a disasterous slope for at least two decades (since Harold Lindsell's *Battle For the Bible - Back Toward Fundamentalism*)". Roger Edson, *Christian Century Post Conservative Evangelicals Greet the Postmodern Age*. (May 3 1995 p 480).

4. Alister McGrath, *A Passion For Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism*, (Inter Varsity Press: Dovers Grove, Illinois, 1996), 170.

5. George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1991), 128,129.

6. *The Modern Theologians, An introduction to Christian theology in the twentieth century*, Volume II, ed., Ford, David F. (Basil Blackwell Ltd.: Oxford, UK, 1989), p. 144.

7. Ibid., p.143.

8. Ibid, 143-144.

9. Ibid, 144.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid, 145.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid, 144.

14. Ibid.

15. See *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* by Carl F.H. Henry.

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17. *The Kingdom of God in America*, p. 162.

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BEYOND FIXITY AND FREEDOM

CHAPTER SEVEN

Chapters One through Six have argued that segments within mainstream Protestantism have often been and continue to be problematically identified with the modern socio-cultural world that has grown up in the United States, and that this identity has been manifested in the patterns of "fixity" and "freedom." Ultimately, however, a problem can only be fully recognized as a problem when it is seen in the light of positive criteria. In other words, in the fullest sense, the "answer" is necessary to understand the problem. No discriminative judgements are possible without some theoretical claims about the truth of the matter. This chapter argues that the inner logic of the church's evangelical theology (as well as other fields of knowledge), requires and empowers Christianity's differentiation from and relatedness to the world. The method used to demonstrate this is metaphorically similar to that used in a court of law. Several "witnesses" who view the matter from slightly different perspectives are examined with respect to the question at hand. This approach requires the reader to suffer circles of arguments that overlap and discussions that sometimes appear tangential to the subject, rather than to enjoy the luxury of concise, direct linear argument. It is of course hoped that breadth of insight into the subject will be the reward of this more cumbersome approach.

Section A

Sociological Resources: Murry Bowen's Family Systems Theory

In the 1950's and 1960's, Murry Bowen broke with the psychoanalytic-Freudian approach of understanding human behaviour and began to construct a new paradigm that would come to be known as family systems theory. Systems thinking represented a shift from looking for the source of a problem in a condition rooted deep in an individual's sub-conscious to looking outside the individual, to the individual's relationship system. Bowen insisted that the particular manifestation of a problem was of relative importance. The real issue, he argued, had to do with a person's response to the emotional signals that were present in their primary social worlds. The importance of the social world for Bowen is not the environmental and cultural forces so often noted for their determining power. Rather, it is the emotional field that comes into play in all levels of human togetherness, from the smallest to the largest of social

organisms.

By emotional field, Bowen was drawing attention to his observation that in the groups to which humans belong, there is an unspoken exertion of emotional energy generated from external and internal sources. Externally, a particular social entity may be subjected to an invasive threat, loss, challenge or crisis which raises anxiety. From within groups (family is central here), there is an exchange of emotional energy generated by the responses of particular individuals to external forces and to constitutional and existential factors such as feelings, motives, drives, self-interests and needs. Edwin Friedman lists "thoughts, fantasies, associations, past connections, physical make-up, genetic heritage and even current metabolic states," as all playing a role in creating an emotional zone that exists between interdependent individuals.[1] Bowen believed that "there is a chronic anxiety in all of life that comes with the territory of living."[2]

"Problematic" behaviour, including many physical diseases, Bowen urged, must be understood as a predictable but self-defeating response on the part of a particular organism to the emotional field that circulates like electrical energy throughout the group. Existence involves coexistence with others within social organisms. Emotional fields are endemic to these social orders. Healthy integration into a given social unit, rather than occurring as a simple, natural and harmonious process, involves challenge and struggle. No stable setting to achieve differentiated togetherness exists as a simple gift of nature (or history). Healthy differentiation involves struggle and change.

Even though its intensity fluctuates, the presence of an emotional field is a fact of nature which thrusts a necessity upon a particular organism to move in one of two directions. One direction is the explicit attempt on the part of a given organism to stabilize its relationship to the group by fusing others to itself through a strategy of control or linking itself to others by eliminating or reducing its presence as a differentiated self. In this option, togetherness is maintained either by eliminating the outwards expression of difference exhibited in the group (i.e., control) or a given organism eliminating or reducing its outward difference with the group (i.e., assimilation).

The other direction Bowen defined as "differentiation." Differentiation represents a self-defining rather than a self-absolutizing or self-marginalizing strategy.

The term attempts to encapsulate a creative response to the emotional field which derives from a deeper source stemming from the unique character of the organism's make-up. Edwin Friedman defines differentiation as "... the capacity to become oneself out of one's self with minimum reactivity to the positions... of others. Differentiation is charting one's way by means of one's own internal guidance system rather than perpetually eyeing the 'scope' to see where others are."[3] It is "...the lifelong process of striving to keep one's being in balance through the reciprocal external and internal processes of self-definition and self-regulation."[4]

Bowen recognized that the great struggle of social existence was integrity in connectedness; integrity of the self to the self in its connecting with others. Differentiation as such does not mean autonomy, independence or individuation (in the popular sense of how those terms are used).[5]

"Differentiation has its origin in the biological notion that cells can have no identity purpose or distinctiveness until they have separated from - that is, left their progenitors... But also implicitly in this biological metaphor or homologue is the idea that such self has little meaning if the cell cannot connect. In its simplest terms, therefore, differentiation is the capacity to be one's own integrated aggregate-of-cells person while still belonging to or being able to relate to a larger colony."[6]

Differentiation is the key to social change. Whereas, in the first direction mentioned above, a particular body's response to anxiety was explicitly aimed at achieving social stability and harmony, in the second direction (differentiation), these goals are left to the realm of "faith." That is to say, they are left to the process. Precisely because of this willingness to forego the "easy" route to achieving stability and "harmony," an environment comes into existence conducive to creative growth. Growth and premature stability are antithetical.

For Bowen, positive change is neither evolutionary (automatic) nor pragmatic (the direct result of human planning and design). Rather change is "accidental."

The hubris that humans can simply *effect* change is denied in favour of a view that by defining themselves with integrity in any given historical situation or social setting, humans can *affect* change. The change that occurs in this model is not legislative. It is to a degree novel in that the new occurs as a result of the kind of connection a person sustains to others. Change emerges out of a setting in which the variables and end results are outside the control of any set of participants. Bowen does

not focus on change, per se, but on process. Integrity of self in relating, especially in critical and disease-ridden situations, is what is called for. People cannot change people, but what they can do is change the emotional field to which others are exposed. By remaining connected to others in a differentiated posture, the emotional field is charged in such a way that a new kind of response is made possible. This approach does not guarantee positive change or what Friedman calls maturation, but it does create a climate conducive for genuine growth.

Bowen's idea of change is in tension with "complementarity." Complementarity refers to the propensity of one body to organize itself around a real or apparent need of another body and to supply what is lacking. This type of connection creates two immediate problems. It relieves the needy party from assuming responsibility for themselves and it creates a pseudo identity for the one filling the need. In this latter instance, a person or body achieves relevance by assuming responsibility for a deficit created by another, one which can only be properly filled by that person becoming responsible for meeting the need themselves. Bowen's theory of change begins precisely at this point. It is a form of connection with others that neither retreats from nor takes responsibility for their problems or needs. It is a form of connection in which the challenge of self responsibility intensifies.[7]

Originally, Bowen's insights were focused on the nuclear family and the behaviour of individual members. Gradually it became clear, as Edwin Friedman states, that "Bowen theory has the potential for being a true paradigm shift that challenges thinking in all the social sciences..."[8] "Bowen theory is not fundamentally about families but about life. The fact that it can be applied to families is almost incidental to the wider focus that Bowen has tended to refer to as the "'human phenomenon.'" "In Bowen thinking, making the nuclear family the unit of observation is only a way station in the outward migration of perspective. Focus on the family is a way to maintain a direction that leads toward understanding the more encompassing natural systems that families mirror, and of which they are a part..."[9] "Bowen theory will appear to belong less to therapy than to the disciplines of sociology, ethology or anthropology."[10] The unit of application for family systems logic, Friedman insists, is not confined to the individual's relation to the family, but all bodies in their relations with other bodies.

Insofar as Christianity's destiny is to take the form of a historical social body

and must relate to other social bodies [including modern nations organized around liberal values], Bowen's observations may provide useful resources for Christianity to think critically about its relationship to the social worlds it shares. This is especially so if Christianity finds within itself theological and biblical precedents that parallel some of Bowen's insights.

After the Revolution and disestablishment, American Protestantism for the first time began to imagine itself as a collective religious force rather than a divided sectarian phenomenon. The problem with this, from the standpoint of Bowen's logic is that this new unity formed in part as a reaction to the anxiety created by disestablishment. Consider for instance the "emotional" impact on Protestantism of Jefferson's view that the future of the churches was to be strictly confined to a private-personal sphere. In his view, Protestant groups were to have no public role or voice. There was also anxiety about the potentially negative social consequences of the spread of republican liberty to all levels of society. Liberal society, without the religious surrogacy of Protestantism, created an emotional climate. This "anxiety" driven response empelled Protestantism toward a relation to the greater social order (characterized by control and assimilation) instead of a creative dialectical connection. Of course, no comprehensive indictment of nineteenth century Protestantism is totally true to the facts. As shown, Protestantism was in a fledgling stage in its relation to the new republic. While it sowed regulative (i.e., control) and integrative seeds that matured into the Religious Right and liberalism, it was not without a measure of differentiation. Differentiation, Bowen insists, is not about a state, but a direction on a scale of greater to lesser distinction.

The deeper problem with the development of post-establishment Protestantism was the nature of its unity. The new unity that emerged was in part a direct answer to the anxiety that was prevalent at the time. What informed the unity came more from the perceived religious dislocation and new political "risks" than a creative engagement with Protestantism's own sources. The "religious" character of this new unity betrays the fact that it was to a significant degree an answer to the perceived situation rather than a creative response which had complete integrity to what Christianity is.

The new unity was formed in order for Protestantism to forge an organic, that is to say, a cultural, unity with the new world. It explicitly attempted to be culturally

integrated into the new social order. Primitive Christianity does speak of an extra-"denominational," extra congregational unity of Christians and Christian congregations, but this unity remains rooted in and attached to an ecclesial definition of Christianity, not a hybrid socio-political or socio-cultural definition of Christianity comprehended within ecclesial categories. The concrete historicity of the church as an entity that comprehends the spiritual and religious unity of Christian believers lays the foundation for properly working out Christianity's differentiation within a large shared social setting such as the political organization of society into a nation. From this standpoint, the challenge that confronts Protestantism in America is to "re-imagine" its unity with an eye to being true to itself. This will not end in weakening or forfeiting its ecclesiality. Systems logic would suggest that the power of Protestantism's connection with America as a nation is in direct proportion to the nature and scope of its unity. Differentiation and unity, understood in their proper sense, are integral. Unity results from a process of clarifying oneself, i.e., differentiation. It is, to quote Friedman, the process of "knowing where one ends and another begins."[11] As the next two sections attempt to show, this involves rediscovering the evangelical rudiments of the church's existence. If Christianity can re-imagine its unity and be creatively connected to its world, penultimate positive change has a real chance to occur. The struggle Bowen would insist is not for the church to be relevant to its particular world, but to be sure it remains true to itself in its presence to the world. Relevance and change (i.e., true growth) are judged after the fact.

Section B

Theological Resources: Karl Barth's Dialectical Construction of the Gospel

Tillich observed that Barth's work "saved contemporary Protestantism from sectarian seclusion on the one hand and from secularism and insignificance on the other."[1] This sentence may be explicated as follows: "Sectarian seclusion" is Christianity-world separatism. Secularism is a form of Christianity - world identification. In Tillich's view, Barth enabled Protestantism to connect to its world in a relevant way. The purpose of this section is to show how Barth's dialectical construction of the gospel provides an indispensable resource to accomplish what Tillich said it accomplished. In other words, how did Barth's thought open the way for

Protestantism to be involved with the world in a way that guaranteed relatedness and differentiation while not succumbing to identification or separatism?

With this goal in mind, this section is organized under five subheadings. The first of these addresses the historical and theological context that was the seed bed for the emergence of Barth's dialectical construction of the Gospel. However, no effort is made to reconstruct the historical, philosophical and theological details of continental Protestantism's "embourgeoisement," as that would require a study parallel to the American situation. This omission is justified because the claim that continental Protestantism lacked critical differentiation from the dominant liberal culture is not disputed.[2] The goal is merely to focus the issue of differentiation as the practical and theoretical problem it was at the time of Barth's theological breakthrough. Two discussions make up the introduction: Barth's own description of continental Protestantism's problem of uncritical identification with its world and a brief theoretical analysis of the problem.

In the second subheading, Barth's early dialectic is examined with special emphasis on the radical distinction it opened up between humans and God. The third subheading focuses on how in time, Barth stabilized his idea of God's distinction from humanity while at the same time making clear God's relatedness to humanity. These discussions pave the way for the fourth essay, which attempts to show how Barth's dialectic lays the groundwork for understanding Christianity's differentiation from and relatedness to the world. In the final sub-heading, Bonhoeffer's insights on this subject are reviewed.

1.

The Breakdown of Church-World Differentiation: The Background of Barth's Dialectical Construction of the Gospel - A Practical Description of the Problem

In 1957, approximately forty years from the writing of the first draft of Romans from his parish study in Safenwil, Barth spoke to a group of ministers, reflecting on the situation that faced them at the turn of the century. Openness was their key problem, he said.[3] The church in its theological engagement with the world had become uncritically open.

The situation as he represented it can be understood as follows. On the one

side there is the need of the church in its theological work to be related to the world, culture and to wrestle with the issues of the time; to expose itself to the world.[4] "It must be engaged in conversation... whatever the means of the dialogue."[5] On the other side the church must be differentiated from society. It must clarify its own identity. This has to do with its own housekeeping; what it believes, its life, its scriptures, its concern of faith.[6] In other words, there exist two tasks, one within and the other without. It can not afford to be insular, separatistic, in the world, or neglect its own task of clarity concerning its uniqueness or difference. In a word, it must be open, but critically open. It must be distinct, but not divorced from the world, problematically closed. Some have not understood Barth on this. He is often judged as problematically closed when it comes to the church and cultural political and philosophical currents. In actual fact he comes out on both sides of this dialectic, albeit in his own unique way.

This dialectic is not symmetrical. The church's relatedness to the world is not primary. Rather the church's clarity about its own definition is the basis upon which relatedness is a constructive possibility. It must take itself seriously and not be forgetful or careless regarding its own content.[7] The positive task in and for the church must take primacy.[8] There is a psychology evident in Barth's thinking at this point. It is not merely a matter of balance between two poles of openness and closedness. Openness and engagement with the currents of thought, culture and social ideology in the world are contingent upon the clarity of the church's own identity and belief. If openness is not to lead to the dilution and loss of identity, an internal basis must exist to insure a critical engagement; integrity in assimilation or participation. Barth talks about the sheer degree of openness and assimilation beyond the capacity to maintain identity--too much stimulation.[9] His observations are strictly practical. That is to say, he recognizes that tension exists between openness and closedness. Healthy openness, he insists, is not a simple possibility. It must take place from a position of some strength and internal security about the church's givenness and truth. It must not be entered into idealistically or naively, as if openness could remain unproblematic purely by human astuteness, as if human beings could simply face the attraction and challenge of external forces and enter into dialogue with them.

Furthermore, the nature of openness needs consideration. The openness that constitutes a kind of dialectic proceeds asymmetrically, he urges. By this he means

that dogmatics can be the basis for good apologetics.[10] Here Barth is not arguing that some sermons resemble a stone cast at the people. Dogmatics as apologetics, as a basis for a church-world dialectic, arises first out of the otherness or strangeness inherent in dogmatics, i.e. the Godness of God, the extrinsic confessional character of truth. This strangeness, he implies, can account for the potency or viability in the dialectic. The point of contact is not a point of contact conceived as "common ground", but precisely in the attraction of difference; the challenge of the dissimilarity, the polarity of opposites.

Second, "dogmatics as apologetics" is not solely the church taking a dogmatic stand, but dogmatics as apologetics! Dogmatics is introduced into a particular context and addresses that.[11] This is not a Tillichian correlation. Rather, it brings a different view and priority of reality which relativizes, if not transforms, the questions and problems in any given situation, without attempting to overthrow either questions or problems. There exists no Christian world view to be exchanged with a cultural, political or ideological one. The church brings to bear its witness to the word of God and there is a critical encounter, a transformative impact on the world. In this way dogmatics as apologetics tends not toward insularity and a problematic separateness, but toward healthy relatedness. If the church-world dialectic is not to be short-circuited, Barth argues, it must be entered into from the priority of dissimilarity, while maintaining the relevance of truth.

Barth reflects that in the nineteenth century liberal Protestant theology took the world too seriously.[12] It entered into apologetics seeking points of contact philosophically and as such sought to disclose the church's common ground with the world. The priority was shifted from the tasks of building up the church itself to that of the church's relatedness to world. Its confrontation with the contemporary age was "decisive and primary."[13] Furthermore the foreign was given birthright.[14] The church-world dialectic was short-circuited insofar as it tended toward assimilation or synthesis. As far as the "world," this meant the loss rather than advance of the church's relevance. It had no critical edge, no prophetic power in the context of the socio-national struggles. It tended to become identified with causes and ideologies with serial predictability. As Barth noted, when he wrote of the "secularizing" of Christ in his day for the "umpteenth time," today for democracy, or pacifism, or the youth movement, or something of the sort, as yesterday it would have been for the

sake of liberal culture or our countries Switzerland or Germany.[15] Viewed within the larger picture of liberalism's premises the synthesis and fusion that was occurring between itself and the Enlightenment -- post-Enlightenment world/culture was not wholly accidental or naive. As Barth said, "nineteenth century [continental Protestant] theology worked on the general assumption that relatedness to the world is a possibility for general acceptance of the Christian faith."[16]

A Theoretical Description of the Problem

In the nineteenth century, the west was confident that through their science, technology, culture and religion, humanity was taking a step toward perfection. In contrast to previous times, humanity was seen as shedding swaddling clothes and opening up a new kind of future. Anthropologically, this was defined by the emergence of what Barth calls the "absolute man" [17] or as Emil Brunner described, a personality "grounded in itself and self sufficient.[18] This was a person who was "free lord over himself".[19] As Robert Jenson points out, this view required humans to be "well rounded" in accordance with the model, "nurtured through the last decades of the eighteenth century by such thinkers and literati as Lessing, Herder and Goethe. This was the vision of the human person as his/her own work of art; of the person as formed through his/her history into something like a classical sonata movement in which the greatest possible diversity is held together in a transcendent temporal unity".[20]

Socially, this spirit is one which breathes the air of confidence in human advancement and progress. The person of the nineteenth century was confronted on every side with the overwhelming spectacles of scientific and technological achievement. No sooner had Darwin published his theory of biological evolution through the survival of the fittest, that thinkers such as Waldo Beach began to build a similar view postulating socio-cultural evolution. A sense of historical consciousness took hold of the collective imagination of this period.

No deep faults, contradictions or divisions characterized nature or human nature. As such, it was not a time of miracles and the supernatural, but one in which no problem was thought to be insurmountable. As Barth puts it, this man of the nineteenth century possessed an infectious confidence. "... He gave up thought of eternity surrounded as he was by the riches of his time." He was, as such, a human

with "unshakable self-assurance".[21]

It was inevitable that Protestantism, which was already part of the socio-cultural fabric over large areas of western Europe, would be penetrated by this spirit of the times, further compromising its critical distinction with its world. This phenomenon is evident in the theological revision and adaptation within continental Protestantism that occurred during the nineteenth century. As shown in Chapter 4, Section A, Schleiermacher opened the century with an effort to interpret Protestant thought in such a way as to establish a critical conversation with Enlightenment thought. In so doing, he shifted the focus of faith to its anthropological side, thereby blazing the way for Protestantism to understand itself on grounds that were ostensibly accessible from an analysis of anthropological phenomena. There was a risk that came with this shift. As Emil Brunner said, "...Theology was in danger of losing itself in the ...psychology of religion."[22] While Schleiermacher (and those who followed him) set up a critical conversation with Enlightenment thought and culture, there occurred a subtle shift in preoccupation. At the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth there developed, as Harold Nebelsick writes, the "...idealization and anthropocentrization of the faith." The individual had become the focus of reality. Divinity had penetrated into humanity and nature. There was a reconciliation and integration of faith and culture."[23] The building blocks for this development had been laid by Hegel, Kant, Schelling and Fichte and it was "out of these...neo-Protestant theology was constructed. The theological philosophy of the philosophers was to become the philosophical theology of the theologians."[24]

Protestantism had become permeated with the cultural and ideological optimism of the times. Formally speaking, it was necessary to restore to Protestantism a proper differentiation or distinction from culture. Materially, this required addressing the problem of unwarranted optimism at its roots. The source of the problem was the anthropocentric premises inseminated into modern culture from the Enlightenment. It was towards that end, that Barth's initial polemic was fundamentally directed. Only by exposing the fallaciousness of this confidence, could Protestantism's identity with its world be dissolved. Later, Barth would approach the challenge inherent in the formal problem, that of constructing a constructive basis to sustain a proper church-world differentiation. It may be said that what Barth did occurred in two stages, one negative, the other positive. First, he reversed liberalism's

postulate that the divine be viewed within the human, insisting instead that the human be viewed over against the divine. He would demonstrate that humanity, viewed in light of the Godness of God, could not be construed as possessing within itself the religious, spiritual or moral potential necessary to postulate the certain development of stable whole lives and societies. In short, he polemicized the philosophical basis upon which progress was postulated. Second, Barth showed that the ground of human existence resided outside of humans in Jesus Christ. It is this premise that emerges to the forefront of Barth's thought which holds profound consequences for the reclamation of church-world differentiation.

2.

Barth's Early Dialectic[25]

God's Differentiation from the World

Bruce McCormack has shown that Barth's dialectical formulation passed through four stages of development en route to its maturity[26] The treatment of Barth's dialectical thought provided in the following is aimed only at supplying a sufficient conceptual base to demonstrate how the gospel lays the foundation for understanding church-world relatedness and differentiation. No effort has been made to sort out all the subtle transitions in the career of Barth's dialectical pilgrimage.

In the truest sense, there is not a "basis" for Barth's dialectic, or, to be more precise, Barth's dialectic does not rest on any "basis." Barth did not pretend to have discovered the hidden rationale of all truth - namely that it possessed a paradoxical character. Rather, Barth's dialectic was derived from revelation and was directed as a critique against all formulations of truth.[27] It was a reflective device and as such it was aimed at mirroring the truth vis-à-vis opposites. The opposites to which Barth, Brunner, Bultmann and Gogarten began to direct their attention between 1918 and 1928, were not about a profound paradox that lies below the surface of this world's order. Rather, they consisted of a theological revelation that humanity and this world cannot be properly understood from the standpoint of information available to humanity and this world but only in light of unseen but revealed God. When one inquires into the "basis" of Barth's dialectical construction, what one really finds are existing resources critically used to dialectically formulate a revealed claim, which itself is intended to function as a resource for critique rather than as a direct simple

formulation or source of truth.

In the following, Barth's dialectic is considered theologically within a biblical perspective and evangelically within a reformation perspective. It is of course impossible to dissect Barth's dialectical paradigm of truth into several parts.

The Biblical-Theological Basis

Barth's dialectic is simple yet profound. It begins on the one side with a claim about the Godness of God, derived from the Bible. "The Godness of God: that was the bedrock we came up against, God's independence and particular character not only over against the natural world but as against the spiritual world also. God's absolute unique existence, might and initiative, above all in his relationship with men."[28] In the simplest analysis, all Barth did was to exploit and radicalize the significance of this truth of the Godness of God, arguing for its absoluteness. And in this, to begin with, it was not what God was within God's self that was of material concern. God, simply by virtue of this absolute Godness, limited human existence. This meant that nothing human could be fused or equated with God.[29] Regardless of the origin of human and religious claims, nothing could be accorded a status beyond that of the human, where fallibility, partiality, distortion and brokenness persisted. This included every claim that stemmed from mystical experience, the Bible, faith, dogma and conscience or the religious and social realm. God was most decisively a dialectical negation of the absoluteness or near absoluteness of humanity. God's Godness imposed a limit, a boundary, a critical contingency over humanity.

Everything rested on this positing of difference. The "infinite qualitative distinction"[30] between God and humanity created the dialectical possibility. The axis of Barth's theology at this point turns not on the separation of God and human beings, but on the qualitative difference. This way of viewing humanity and God within a dialectical configuration resembles Chalcedon's Christological formulation, "union without fusion, distinction without separation." The emphasis on difference is not to be equated with separateness. The statement quoted in the beginning of this discussion and another one similar, but even more emphatic, exemplify this attraction to "God's absolute unique existence ... *in his relationship to men.*" "God is in heaven and you are on earth. The relation of this God with this man, the relation of this man with this God is for me the theme of the Bible as well as the substance of

philosophy."[31] The qualitative difference itself creates the basis for relatedness, not separation. God's Godness related to the human imposes a definition on the human. Descriptions of humanity from an analysis of humanity in isolation or in total, are flawed because they lack a dialectical reference point. They cannot bring to human self-understanding anything except a "self" understanding. Such a view is limited by virtue of its being closed within a monadic sphere. God, posited as God of humanity, exorcizes the pretensions of human absoluteness. Self-definition in light of God opens up critical distance, self-redefinition and appraisal. It facilitates a realistic, sober view of human-cultural endeavors.

Everything depends on a difference that is qualitatively grounded and on a relational unity that does not collapse into a fusion. As the Chalcedonian formulation indicates, two possibilities always exist. On the one hand, a separation can occur through radical distinction. Under this option, using Barth's logic, one would likely point to deism, theism, and agnosticism, which share common ground with secularism and humanism. Any approach that tends to view God in a non-involved relation to the world falls into this category.

On the other hand, there is a danger of the collapse of unity into a fusion. Here one would likely list mysticism as well as modernism and natural theologies.

Barth claimed to arrive at his dialectical insight first from the Bible. He never ceased to emphasize that what he encountered in scripture was God breaking through and addressing the human person. In the Bible, Barth encountered the "Godness of God." God, presenting himself as God, was the foundation of all truth. Truth was not derived from philosophical presuppositions precisely because these were extensions of human thought. When God reveals Godself as Lord of humanity, an entirely new view of humanity comes into existence.

Barth's simple appeal to the Bible is his fortress from which he is able to sustain the possibility for his dialectical claim. Later he reshaped this into a sophisticated doctrine of revelation, which sought to foreclose all philosophical and theological compromises with this biblical claim. It is sufficient here to note that early on Barth appealed to his rediscovery of God in the Bible, arguing that what emerged was not human thoughts, ideas, experiences and faiths about God, but God speaking and addressing the human as God in love and judgment, in yes and no.[32]

This appeal is to be understood in contrast to any other possible sources,

especially those originating in human experience and reason. Barth recognized immediately that these sources short-circuited his dialectic. In the Bible, God is represented as an unreasoned lordly sovereign being that confronts humanity with uncompromising determination. From out of God's own concrete unique and absolute particularity, God says, "I will be their God and they will be my people."

It may be safely concluded, as Brunner pointed out, that Barth's initial "insight" was that truth in the Bible was cast in the mould of fall, brokenness, the disjuncture between God and humanity. Truth did not take the form of monadic conceptions, ideas or doctrines, per se. Rather, it was consistently found in a dualistic, historical and existential form.[33] Accordingly, the present world was viewed over against the kingdom of God, the person over against fall and creation over against redemption. Humanity is viewed in light of God in Christ and time in light of eternity.

This dualistic structuring of truth meant that humanity and this world could not be saved simply by being improved either by cultural or religious means. No ideal concept of reality or moral idealism was seen to exist even as "potential." A rupture or a discontinuity between the human and the divine was seen to be the "sub-text of scriptural truth". Nowhere in scripture could one find "essential truth," or truth in its religious or "spiritual" profundity, only "dialectic" truth. Thus, truth was a viewing of the whole concrete person, lost, judged, condemned and in the grip of death but in Christ found, justified and in possession of life. It was such truth that confronted a person from a standpoint outside of themselves and tended to define personhood and reality in terms and meanings not accessible "essentially" from within or apart from this word.

Barth did not see himself as arriving at this insight from a process involving the critical parsing of the historicalness of the text of scripture, but from a process which involved spiritual wrestling with the "inner dialectic of the subject matter."[34] He found that this "inner dialectic" is the pervasive sub-structural form of truth that ran through the entire Bible.[35] Barth came to view as a flawed premise the idea that one could simply peel through the layers of historical conditioning and access the essential truth.[36] At its deepest level, the problem was that this approach not only required a high level of confidence in the work of historical criticism, but that it failed to grasp the character of truth . Essential truth could not be simply isolated, grasped and applied to the human situation. The nature of historical inquiry often aims at

explaining the truth as if truth was a one line reasoning process which is "non-paradoxical" and "direct."[37] Dialectic as the sub-text was a process of coming to grips with the paradox of truth, which must of necessity be met with faith, i.e., "the broken line of faith."[38] It draws the person, not into the security of known truth, but the crisis of faith. It is the epistemological break, not the epistemological continuity between the human sphere and God, that one comes up against in scripture.

For Barth, truth cannot be simply stated by making, as it were, a unified presentation of it. Truth implies that whatever is posited can only be posited in light of a polar negation and that one half truth is "no truth at all!"

Reformation-Evangelical Basis

It is Barth himself who claims to be developing his dialectical thought from the Reformation and Paul. In both Luther, Paul and Kierkegaard, he saw that reliance on paradox was central. From Luther he could point to *simul justus et Peccator* or *desperatio fiducialis*, as well as his law-gospel antithesis in scripture and Christian existence (an antithesis that for Luther was never resolved). From Paul he could cite any number of paradoxes, such as "having nothing yet possessing all things", or "the things that are seen are temporal and the things that are not seen eternal." But central to both of these, was the article of justification by faith. In justification by faith interpreted along the Reformation lines, Barth recognized a primary Reformation principle in support of his dialectical approach.[39]

The early Barth's Evangelical-Reformation dialectic can best be understood within a discussion of the idea of crisis. Historically, the idea of crisis is indebted to what the ancient philosophers named krisis, the point beyond human perception. This is the point that came to be informed by Hegel, where the ideal interfaces with the actual, creating disparity. By the second edition of his Romerbrief, Barth came to his own usage of krisis. Partly because of his brother Heinrich's philosophical work on this subject, Barth radicalized the idea of crisis. For Barth, no realm of idea came into view at the boundaries of cognitive knowledge. The essence of the supernatural was not lodged in the natural realm. No subtle correspondence occurred between the actual physical realm and the spiritual realm. Eternity was not lodged in time producing tensions which eventually gave way to penultimate resolutions. Of course this does not mean Barth was a materialist. He had found in his brother's thinking a key.

Writing of Heinrich's philosophy, McCormack states that he took a position beyond neo-Kantiasm by projecting the *ursprung* (i.e., the standpoint outside every given content generated by the cognitive apparatus of the human knower) into the realm of idea: a realm which was *"fundamentally withdrawn from the world"*[40] Barth (Karl) recognized that unless the dialectic between the actual and the ideal (so called) was made absolute, no truly critical force would occur. In other words, unless the ideal was completely removed beyond the human this world realm, it could only end in mirroring back to humans their own spiritual, religious and cultural projections. The krisis about which the philosopher spoke, Barth exploited and absolutized so it could be reconceived as a dialectic between humanity and God who was wholly other; a God who revealed God's self in Jesus Christ. In this way, Barth addressed the realm of the actual, however it was conceived, but supremely in cultural achievements, ethical-moral and religious terms, as well as truth claims and was brought in dialectical tension with another realm, the realm of God, the kingdom of God, the absolute and non-contingent righteousness of God. This encounter with the "ideal" created a crisis. It may be called simply a "di-opsis", a seeing two, a breaking of a myopsis such that the scales of illusion fall from one's eyes. It is a kind of disenchantment in which the durability, permanence and perfectibility of the realm of the actual is rejected. Death embodies and signifies this point from the side of the actual. It is that point inside the realm of the actual that is the least capable of disguising the temporal finite weakness which is descriptive of the entire realm of the actual.

This is a way of construing Barth's early ideas of crisis so that the Evangelical constituent of his dialectic can be clearly seen. The Evangelical component, that is to say the Christological element in Barth's early thought, both participates in this dialectical tension and functions as its peculiar resolution. For Barth, the rupture or "diopsis" creating the crisis is ameliorated by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ structures the two in distinction while securing the level of the actual (i.e. the world, time, the human) from "an-nihilation." Jesus Christ participates in this crisis and is its unique resolution. He embodies the forgiveness, mercy, grace, resurrection and love, which at every point participates in the negation or "no," but His participation equally introduces God's "yes." Mercy implies judgment, grace--helplessness, forgiveness--sin, saving love--lostness and resurrection to life real death.

Barth's evangelical resolution "saves" not because it enters within the actual and infuses it (gratia infusa) with transforming grace, such that it becomes durable and perfectible, but because it gives the world a provisional existence that is due to grace that is outside the world in Christ. This life outside, faces the actual and by its critical gaze renews, judges and corrects it. It saves it from destroying itself by works of pride or the nihilism of despair. Because it faces the world with a word of forgiveness, grace, mercy and redemption, the world is affirmed in God given (gifted) value. It refuses to allow it to conceive of itself as an end in itself, while also by its disparity with the good, the world (i.e. the human realm) cannot extricate itself from the good.

It is to be emphasized that this Evangelical resolution does not resolve the tension between the ideal and the actual. Rather, it makes living in it possible. It both reinforces the dialectical cleavage or polarization, while at the same time it provides a new way of being in this tension. Concerning the world, it is no more a case of "seeing men as trees walking". No naive optimism or substantial belief in the perfectibility of the created good persists in this critical disparity. Moreover, no unqualified confidence in the gains of the human or submersion of the self in the religio-social and political projects is possible. The human is saved, on the one hand, from the loss of the self by escaping the ascendancy of himself/herself, or any particular human embodiment of the good, to a level of determinative importance. On the other hand, because the realm of the actual is claimed in forgiveness and mercy, the self is saved from the annihilation of despair. Barth intends that his dialectic enables an engagement in the world with one's "eyes open," critically, relatively, hopefully, substantially, but nevertheless "positively." It allows no escape from the tasks of the world that seek to lessen the disparity between the actual and the ideal.[41] It is both the hubris and submersion within these that his dialectic disallows. Precisely because dialectic does not posit a fusion of the absolute, i.e. the "righteousness of God" with the world, nor a separation of it from the world, but rather presents the world in a larger framework of grace, mercy and forgiveness, the world is caught in a kind of polar attraction. As such, it is unable to extricate itself and either destroy itself through hubris or fall into its created and sinful subsistence, which cannot sustain it.

In 1919 Barth addressed the question of the place of the Christian in society

from the logic inherent in his new dialectic.[42] In the course of his presentation, he set out three possibilities. One possibility is that of "an unhappy separation, a thorough-going opposition between two dissimilar magnitudes".[43] Presumably Barth is speaking here of Christianity and modern society. The other side he generically names as "ecclesiasticism."[44] Ecclesiasticism is the attempt to fuse and connect the two worlds together by extending the institutions and projects of the church outward into the zones of society intersecting society and thus "taming" or domesticating it, i.e., "Christianizing" it. This fusion, Barth urges, begins with benign social work but ends with the full scale secularism of Naumann--"the liberalism of Naumann."[45] Between these two possibilities, Barth attempts to unfold his elusive dialectical position, which neither succumbs to separatism nor loses itself in fusion. The dialectical way necessitates listening for the word of God which involves a revolution before all revolutions; a word from above that penetrates human revolutions but is not co-extensive with them. The kingdom of God has its own goal which is germane to God and under God's power and direction. Humankind must wait on and follow after this kingdom, working as it were in its wake, but never confusing their work with God's. Here, as in the realm of truth, Barth's dialectic gives one no place to stand, no "standpoint."[46]

The elusive character of this resolution must not be missed. Because it partakes of the nature of paradox, it resists being reduced to a simple equation. The early Barth sees his evangelical resolution as pointing toward a new way between two typical options. On the one side, this may be referred to as dogmatism, and on the other side, mysticism and modernism. It is what these two extremes in principle stand for (in so far as they by contrast disclose the unique character of this evangelical resolution), that is important. The two poles of Barth's dialectic may be described (for the sake of the present point), as "the idea of God" and "the criticism of humanity." These as emphasized are not to be considered independently. The dialectical approach which Barth argues is the Reformation-Pauline approach which insists that these two must be considered together. The criticism of man, he says, does not lead to God, but "man with a vengeance."[47] But neither does modernism which believes in the potential of humanity arrive at God. Instead, modernity ends up trumpeting man with a loud voice. Both of these represent a collapse of distinction. The idea of God and the criticism of humanity are in need of a structure that prevents them from

collapsing into indistinction. Both of the above paths begin in a relative distinction and progress along a path toward diminished distinction which bears fruit in human distortions.

If mysticism and modernism, beginning on the side of the human, seek to actualize the God in the human "via negativa" or "positiva," Biblicism and traditionalism begin on the side of the idea of God. They seek to overcome the tension that the dialectic names as permanent. By providing fixed truths about the idea of God, the kingdom of God and salvation, these violate the Godness of God bringing truth into the unambiguous grasp of the human. Protestant scholasticism, with its elevation of the Bible to inerrant infallible status, as well as its mastery of Christian truth by orthodox dogma, (underpinned by rational epistemologies), most fully depicts this dynamic.

The problems with this approach, as the early Barth and Brunner clearly realized, were many. Most fully they attempted to pull God into the grasp of the human. Moreover, not only is the human distorted through religious hubris, but the critical encounter with God is overcome. The human is placed in something like a spectator, worse yet a proprietorial relationship with the idea of God. "Fixity" in truth means that the church has swung to one side of the dialectic and "set up house" pontificating, legislating, controlling and dispensing the truth, thus destroying the "Godness of God."

The dialectical understanding of Barth is progressive in its development. In time, continuity and some discontinuity are evident. Nevertheless, from the beginning there is a use of the Evangelical-Reformation that in principle persists into the mature Barth. This use is that of introducing into the dialectical opposites a mediating center. For the early Barth, Jesus Christ becomes the "living center" which keeps this dialectic from collapsing or sundering, such that the opposites irreconcilably cleave. Jesus Christ represents the mediating point where the divine intersects the human realm without intersecting humanity. That is to say, the realm of God and the realm of the human intersect only in this one person, Jesus Christ. Everything else that Barth goes on to say in his massive dogmatics is an addendum and exegesis of this one claim. It is a mistake to argue that Barth simply moved "from dialectic to dogmatics." In the broader, but no less accurate sense of the term dialectic, Barth is involved in a defense of this one incarnational claim that structures all life and

theology in a tension characterized by the Chalcedonian Christological formulation union without fusion, distinction without separation. The foundational structure of Barth's early and mature theology rests on this incarnational premise, that Jesus Christ both sustains and intensifies the tension between God and humanity, while at the same time securing this tension from an irreconcilable rupture.

The difference, properly speaking, is not between dialectic and dogmatics, but one having to do with ensuring the adequacy of dialectic itself. In time, Barth was forced to greater clarity regarding the theological underpinning of his dialectic.[48]

The question is, how does the Reformation-Evangelical's appropriation of Jesus Christ enable the church to avoid the twin shoals of Biblicism and traditionalism on the one side and mysticism and modernism on the other? Does not Jesus Christ provide "hard" or "fixed" meaning and truth about the idea of God on the one side? If not, how can it be said that the truth of God is in any concrete sense accessible to humans? On the other side, does not Jesus Christ in some real sense provide an entry for God into history, the realm of the actual? If so, how can this dialectic be maintained in its absoluteness?

Succinctly stated, how does this evangelical dialectic bring God near so as to encounter the human and keep God distinct and elusive so as to protect God's Godness?

The problem is a practical and theological one. If God is dealt into the human equation, does it not compromise the dialectic? If God is dealt out, does it not conclude in the direction of nihilism, humanism and secularism? Paradox or dialectic itself is not fully adequate, as is evident by Barth's attention to crisis. While Barth conceived of the two, the "actual" and the "ideal," as intersecting in Jesus Christ, he also construed Jesus Christ as a means via the kerygma to that end. Eventually the discussion had to reach the point where it addressed the role of the human subject. Jesus Christ, as the one who embodied God's yes and no, was brought out of the past into the eschatological now, through the kerygma. It was at this critical moment in the human subject, that the "absolute" antithesis between time and eternity was arrested. This may be seen as a kind of realized eschatology. The crisis of faith, conceived as the moment of subjective decision overcame the chasm of paradox.

At that early juncture in Barth's thought, this resolution seemed adequate. Theologically it seemed defensible in light of the Kierkegaardian argument for the

subjectivity of all truth, an argument no doubt indebted in part to Schleiermacher. Neither Barth nor Kierkegaard, nor for that matter, the liberal pioneer Schleiermacher, contended for the absence of objective truth. The crisis, however, focused on the subjective appropriation of Jesus Christ which required a decision, a decision which at no point could be made in the comfort of the objective fixity of truth with a capital T.

Here Barth 's construal of this crisis clearly resembles existential thought. In time, Barth would move away from this "crisis incarnationalism" to emphasize more fully his word of God-revelation incarnationalism over the issue of subjectivity. He was concerned that this existentially informed subjectivity compromised his dialectic. He saw that the objective pole of his dialectic tended to gravitate so that it was in danger of being ensconced within an existentially informed idea of crisis. If God in the last analysis could only be discussed and referred to, even conceived of as from within this movement of the subjective crisis of decision, then for all practical purposes, his dialectic returned humans to an anthropological focus. At the end of the day, the truth of God as wholly other remained trapped inside the human experience of faith.

From this analysis, it is possible to see that Barth's move away from crisis is not an abandonment of dialectic in its true sense, but an effort to protect it. The question, "What is Barth doing"? is significant. Barth is on a theological pilgrimage as a pastor and professor seeking to pry two "worlds" apart (fusion), while keeping them together in distinction. It might be said that his dissatisfaction with his early theology, to the degree that he was dissatisfied, was because of its practical implications. He no doubt came to realize that his dialectic would bear fruit in kind not dissimilar to the "captivity" he sought to break from. R. Roberts likely overstates the issue when he argues that in his early dialectical formulation, Barth laid hold of a radical diastasis and abstracted it into pure ontological antitheses which could then be exploited with destructive power.[49] In fact, Barth never sharpened his new theology into a dialectical wedge that could be driven to the point of a complete cleavage of time and eternity, and infinite God and finite humanity. His dialectical implement was only for prophetic not destructive ends. Even so, Barth eventually modified his thinking in his Christological development.

3.

Reconciling God's Differentiation From And Relatedness To the World

Even though in Barth's dialectic the faith event was conceptualized in such a way as to safeguard the otherness of God and the relativity of a human knowing of God, it nevertheless made the human experience of God as a point of contact with God. In other words, as much as Barth had attempted to close the door to a problematic human knowledge and experience of God, he recognized, in principle, that this door was left open and compromised the dialectic and the purpose for which it had been crafted.

There existed a risk that the principle of the infinite qualitative distinction between God and humanity might be compromised by faith. In principle, the absoluteness of the cleavage lays the foundation for nihilism, the absence of it, or relativity of it, a foundation for utopian hubris. In his dialectical beginning, Barth had made its relativity rest in the nature of faith. What Barth eventually did was reconstrue faith, taking from it any potential to become the focus of an independent inquiry into an experiential knowledge of God.[50] This required that faith be absolutely correlated to Jesus Christ. Faith was made to derive all its significance from its functional instrumental character of orienting the person to the extrinsic source and ground of significance, Jesus Christ. Faith, no less the work of the Holy Spirit, was the recognition of where one's life and connection with God resided, namely, outside oneself in Jesus Christ.

Instead of a concentration on the "eternal moment" as the impossible possibility, that flash of revelatory lightening that relativized humanness and placed one in a new tension, Barth began to focus more singularly on Jesus Christ. As Alasdair Heron tersely puts it in this change, "revelation (was) in Jesus Christ and not merely through Jesus Christ..."[51] Faith was correspondence to that reality, a change of inquiry from faith in itself to the object of faith, faith understood less mystically, less existentially and more Evangelically.[52]

This necessitated epistemological clarification. Barth recognized that existential concepts were relied on to inform faith and thus supplanted the very intentions at which his dialectic was aimed. If a human system of thought was allowed to explain the reality and action of faith, then Christianity was welded to

philosophy which returned it to a debtor relation to prevailing cultural ideas. As Jenson puts it, "why should faith find the warrants of its rationality in analysis conducted prior to faith?"[53]

Again, Barth moved in a more singular evangelical direction. The revelation in Jesus Christ not only became the focus, but was made to inform the rational-conceptual coherence of belief. The being of God is the axis of all faith and theology. These derive their existence from the fact that God reveals God's self. This revelation is made in Jesus Christ; He communicates this revelation of Himself to us by His Spirit. In this revelation, God communicates God's self as sovereign Lord and judge over humanity in Jesus Christ, as a gracious and forgiving father and savior in Jesus. This is a certain kind of knowledge that has its own kind of rational integrity arising out of who God is, a knowledge that at the same time is definitive for what humanness is. Faith does not create this knowledge.

The significance of this approach for the larger problem that launched Barth into this theological project, can be more clearly seen by the following contrast. A typical Evangelical strategy is to first identify the human predicament, the plight and problem and situation in which women and men find themselves. This strategy requires naming, conceptualizing and interpreting the particular predicament, using constructs, ancient or modern. Second, the strategy must correlate the conceptualized predicament to the biblical - evangelical resolution.

Barth, in contrast to this approach, placed the problem and solution of humanity's predicament in the same framework, disclosed in and through Jesus Christ. The rationale for his approach was not derived from a conceptual coherence outside that disclosed in the gospel. This "consistency," in principle, safeguarded the original purpose of his dialectic--that of the problematic fusion of cultural with religious (Christian) ideas. From a positive perspective, Barth's approach was more than preventative. It was in principle an inversion, so that rather than creating a relevance for the gospel, the human situation were given an "evangelical" reading. The discontinuity completes and safeguards the human turn to externals.

By firmly locating the sovereignty of God, i.e. the "Godness of God" in Jesus Christ in which love is made the ultimate principle of God, the being of God is seen as being in relation. The affirmative character of God comes into view. As such, God's being is given a discrete extrinsic verity in Christ, that is to say, God comes into the

human realm in a way that is not vulnerable to human exploitation. In Christ, God is structured in differentiation from and relatedness to humanity. This provides a theological ground that in principle prevents the search for God in cultural anthropological and immanental sources. Theologically, God's being is given a qualitatively distinct existence with regards to humanity. The knowledge from this revelation provides a new realistic security from which human existence can proceed. While it undermines the basis for idealistic pretensions, it restores to humanity a gracious forgiving context out of which to live.

The incarnation may also be understood in this light. In the incarnation, God as creator, judge and redeemer, is given a "concrete" existence in time. In Jesus Christ (toward humanity) God fulfills God's self in these vocations which are intrinsic to God's being. Likewise, in Jesus Christ as son of man, humanity has been judged by a righteous God and condemned, forgiven by a gracious God and redeemed. In Jesus Christ humanity is the son/daughter of God, lives to the glory of God and worships and serves this God. In Jesus Christ, humanity is turned out to his/her neighbor in love and service. In Jesus Christ, humanity collectively is reintegrated in a loving unity, serving each other, reorganized under God in devotion and loyalty.

The incarnation recasts humanity in a new mould. In Christ, God and humanity are related in a new way. Humanity is seen to be reintegrated under God in devotion to God and alongside of one another in love. The task that is left to human beings is to live reflexively out of the new Christocentric reality. To search for the religious and moral depth in human nature and culture is to look for God in the wrong place. Even though such efforts are done in the name of religion and the interest of humanity, such efforts must be judged as pretensious; a species of hubris.

4.

God's Differentiation From and Relatedness To The World as the Basis For Understanding The Church's Differentiation From and Relatedness To the World

Barth came to recognize that the continental Protestantism with which he was familiar was too deeply mired in the prevailing cultural ethos. It lacked sufficient differentiation from its world requisite for a critical relation to it. As a pastor, Barth saw a Protestantism that was apparently blind and unaffected by the injustices of the

bourgeois world.[54] Moreover, he observed that when segments of Protestantism did awake to these injustices and rallied with secular socialistic forces, they did not possess sufficient distinction to prevent them from more or less collapsing their identity with these particular counter-cultural movements, causes and values.[55]

This particular problem had its roots in the evangelical revision of Schleiermacher reviewed in Chapter Four. Schleiermacher relativized the objective elements of Protestant faith while elevating the subjective, anthropocentric, immanental side. It was this revision that opened the door for a more consistent relevant commerce between Protestantism and its world and the idealism(s) of the time. Once the objective element was more or less severed, Protestantism was vulnerable to becoming identified with any idealism. This is one side of the problem of Protestantism's weakness to culture. It points to why Protestantism could and did lose itself in the face of the attraction of its world.

The other side of the problem was the fact that the Enlightenment world arising out of a crumbling Constantinian era was essentially an idealistic world, in the sense that it placed a new confidence in the capacities and possibilities inherent in rational man/woman. It saw itself as not only breaking free from an authoritarian era, but possessing within itself the keys to a superior human future.

The fundamental problem of this nineteenth century world was that the line of distinction between the finite and the infinite had eroded, insofar as the human was not viewed in critical tension with God.[56] That is to say, the human was viewed in a more optimistic framework. This is one way of describing the theoretical skeletal structure which supported the full-bodied, naive anthropological and social optimism (progress) that characterized the period. Protestantism partook of that confusion so that it may be said that its insufficient differentiation from and problematic relatedness to its world mirrored the prevailing cultural confusion regarding God's peculiar distinction from and relatedness to humanity. It was at this point that Barth's work fundamentally began. He did not mount an isolated attack on Protestantism's embourgeoisement so much as he confronted this cultural confusion at a bedrock theoretical level.

Barth commenced to rebuild the theoretical foundation which supported the God-human distinction in such a radical way, that it not only destroyed the basis for naive optimism in the evolving Enlightenment social dream, it threatened to negate

the value of all cultural efforts. In short, Barth's early dialectic had achieved differentiation between God and humanity almost at the expense of relatedness. It threatened to open up a God-human chasm. Theoretically speaking, the problem was how these two, God's differentiation from and relatedness to humanity, could be held together.

Only when he reapproached the covenantal significance of the incarnation was this problem resolved. And it was precisely in that incarnation breakthrough, that "distinction from" was recast in a larger framework of "relatedness to." Relatedness reassumed priority, but not in a form which was vulnerable to human exploitation. In other words, Barth first took humanity's "godness" away, negating simple continuity between humanity and God, so as to return humanity to the covenantal God *in* Jesus Christ, a God that chose his own form of being present to humanity. This God "appeared" as true God and Lord of humanity in judgment and love. As such, human life was reclaimed on a provisional basis, and therefore sobered with regard to naive idealisms, but not destroyed.

Barth's dialectical construction of the gospel provided a theoretical basis for continental Protestantism to reclaim a differentiated relation to the greater socio-cultural world in two ways. First, it gave the church a realistic basis from which to view and relate to the socio-cultural and political developments within the world. As already discussed, Barth's insight into the gospel provided the church with a point of distinction from which it could "safely" come into contact with the modern world's scientific and technological power, cultural "richness" and ideological claims, without being naively and uncritically drawn into a celebration and attachment to these. At the same time, the gospel prohibited the church from escaping into a cynical, separatistic and nihilistic attitude and relation toward the world.

All men and women in the world and the socio-cultural and political projects of the world, exist by virtue of God-given, i.e. gifted value, and are provisional; that is to say, they persist by virtue of the covenant of grace that God provided in Christ. Their place as such, is not established by fact of creation, historical validity or development, but because of the unseen patience, purpose and judgement of the resurrected Lord.[57] If they existed by virtue of natural law, they would be credited with an autonomy and dignity that would be problematic.

The church understands this and therefore cannot escape the debt that comes

with this knowledge. It is the responsibility of human beings both in their individual and collective endeavors neither to fail to exert proper efforts to live responsibly and improve human-social life, nor to attribute to these endeavors an autonomy, freedom and importance that is beyond their bounds. Especially is this true of the state that is invested with power. The institutions of society are given a functional role in the economy of God's purpose. Their work has to do with order, the prevention of chaos and the investiture of power against tyranny. The state exists to prohibit the over-reach of economic, social and cultural forces which would enslave and dehumanize.

Here the logic is again negative. Barth is not willing to give institutions a truly positive role in the economy of God's redemptive work. Human socio-political agencies exist in and under the Lordship of Christ and their role is functional, having to do with keeping social space from being surrendered to the demonic, chaotic, tyranous anti-Christ forces.[58] Their role is not to become a material agent for the realization of the Messianic Kingdom and its redemptive healing. The church sees the orders and endeavors of human society from a different perspective, purpose and function than society itself views these.[59] Barth recognizes that the gospel alone sustained the church's different view and empowered it to address these institutions from a different critical imperative, which bears the impress of their penultimate provisional character and their functional relation to the Kingdom.

This is a summary of the "negative" way in which the church is enabled to take up a differentiated relation to its world. *Positively speaking, differentiation was empowered by Barth's dialectical construction of the gospel because it returned the church to its own primary task and vocation in the world.* It laid the foundation for him to clarify the direction Protestantism must move -- away from a cultural existence toward an "ecclesial" existence. Essentially, what Barth did was to call Protestantism back to its true ecclesial identity as the primary form of being in the world. In the covenantal framework of God's relatedness to humanity [relatedness cast in the distinction of being a relatedness *in* Jesus, thereby preserving God's Godness, i.e. God's difference], Barth had discovered the foundation which supported the unique existence of the church.

Basically, Barth built his doctrine of church on this Christological foundation and out of a historical sensitivity shaped by his experience of liberal Protestantism's predisposition to become uncritically enmeshed in its world. Protestantism's

differentiation from and relatedness to its world, he saw, could only be secured by its correspondence to this preceding fundamental Christological framework of God's relatedness to and distinction from humanity. Only in this way do these two dynamics hold together.

The genius of Barth's approach is that he first addressed the relation of God to humanity and humanity to God in Jesus Christ. By clarifying this, he laid the foundation for Christianity to reclaim its proper focus and interest. In Christ, Barth argued, all humanity is in a new relation to God and others, in a new form of social co-existence. The gospel calls all human beings into conformity to this messianic reality.[60] The church, properly understood, is a penultimate but substantial incarnation of that. It is the appropriate response to the new messianic reorganization of humanity that has made its debut in time in Jesus Christ.[61] "Ecclesial" Christianity, versus cultural Christianity, is not correlated "directly" to its world in relevance (although it is no less worldly). Rather, the world is related to the gospel's universalistic vision to which the church bears witness, embodies, and by which it judges all individual and social constructions of reality. The church as such can never afford to surrender the "high" ground. It can ill afford to be naive about modernity as a unified, coherent and promising socio cultural configuration of humanity.

Barth shifted the emphasis away from the significance of the subjective anthropocentric side of the gospel in favor of developing its covenantal-historical significance. Over against the cultural fusion of Christianity to the world - a modern anthropocentric, idealistic world - Barth first asserted the qualitative difference of God and humanity (his initial dialectic) and then the relation of God to humanity in Jesus Christ, the New Covenant. This then became the foundation which theoretically sustained Christianity's ecclesial distinction from modernity. Conceptually speaking, Christianity thereby was enabled to be ecclesia--the "called out" or called apart--because it was given a substantive basis whereby that distinction (not dualism) could be sustained. In this manner, its discontinuity with the modern world was given an evangelical basis. The God of the church and the gods of the world were given contrary loci. They were mutually exclusive.

By giving God *His own* relation to humanity, but one in which humanity was reciprocally called into a new relation to God, Barth invited Christianity in the modern world to reunderstand its ecclesial character, i.e. its differentiated character. The only

way Barth found to emancipate God from an anthropocentric culture and yet keep this God related to humanity was to "evangelize" this God. Only as such, could it be ensured that God defined God's self in God's relation to humanity and vice versa. This was Barth's critical breakthrough.

Insofar as Christianity makes this God (i.e. God related to humanity in Jesus Christ and humanity related to God in Jesus Christ) the revealed truth that determines its particular existence does Christianity become ecclesial Christianity. Christianity's discontinuity with the world is given a substantive, not merely a formal basis. Accordingly, that the church's difference with the world of common men and women is not substantive to itself, thereby creating a basis for a church-world dualism. Rather, because Jesus Christ is the sole place of the union of God and humanity, the church's distinction from the world is provisional, eschatological, functional, penultimate, relative. The church is the first fruits of humanity coming into conformity to the new order of humanity disclosed in Jesus Christ. The church exists in the world to witness to this truth that precedes and transcends it. Its visible community, i.e. its distinct societal shape, is not its own act so as to protect itself from the world or gain control over the world, but an act of fidelity to the truth of God revealed in the gospel, a truth that requires and inaugurates a new social-spiritual reconfiguration of humanity. The act of "ecclesiality" awaits eschatological verification.

Christianity, in faithfulness to this truth in Christ, is given a relationship to the world which is defined not by the world, its needs and projects, but by the gospel. *The church's question to itself is not about its relevance to the world, but its faithfulness in calling those in the world into proper relation with the new reality that made its debut in Christ.* Through the gospel, the church sees the entire world in the inexorable grip of a new messianic destiny that has already revealed itself. As such, the church's prophetic character is not merely "prophetic." Its task vis-à-vis the world is not merely to name the wrong in the world and call for its replacement with the right, so the world will work better. Rather is it to go further and speak of the reorganization of right in the Kingdom of God that has come and is coming in Christ.

The "strange" element in Christianity, that essential character that sets it apart and enables Christianity to resist being domesticated by the world, is its evangelical-eschatological *ordo salutis*. Without it, Christianity can be easily

subverted to human social, national, and individual ends. By making the church's foundation evangelical truth, the God *in* Jesus Christ, the church is placed in a confessional *relation to the world* around it. The fundamental discontinuity between God and this world, except in Jesus Christ, elevates a confessional "dogmatic" over against, for instance, the apologetic-philosophical witness that dominated nineteenth century Protestantism.

In this way, the church does not begin on the assumption of shared underlying premises or religious premises which the world can be made to recognize through a more profound use of reason in natural/universal laws. Properly speaking, the church knows no common truth shared between itself and the world. Its task is to relate the world (its problems and issues) to "evangelical" truth, not universal truth accessible through reason and apologetics. Evangelical truth, because it is not anthropocentric, but revealed theocentric and eschatological truth, is not easily exploitable, for instance, by anxieties created by the modern-post-modern development about the absence and need of universal absolutes to secure a runaway relativism and libertinism. Nor is "evangelical" truth easily exploitable by modernity's optimism for social-human development.

Under the pressure and attractions, the problem and promise of modernity, reason has been applied to scripture in the interest of both rendering it more absolute and universally authoritative over humankind and more critically relative to the interest of modern humanity. For Barth, the church has no simple access to authoritative religious absolutes via scripture. God embodies "absoluteness" and calls humanity directly into relation to God's self in the person and form of Jesus Christ. The God who reveals God's self, only in Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit, calls humanity into that reality. Scripture by the Spirit is made to participate, serve, form (i.e. give definition to) that evangelical reality as a faithful witness. It is not to be used to provide the basis for a morality independent, alongside or in addition to "evangelical truth."

Section C

"Ethical" Resources: Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the Church's Relation to the World

The following reviews three essays taken from Bonhoeffer's writings, two of them from his *Ethics,* "Christ, Reality and Good," "On the Possibility of the Word of the Church to the World," and "Protestantism Without Reformation." The second essay which is reviewed might arguably be regarded as Bonhoeffer's most insightful treatment of the subject of the church's distinction from, but relatedness to the world, with special emphasis on safeguarding the basis and importance of distinction. In the first essay, relatedness and distinction are addressed with the emphasis shifted to the importance and basis of relatedness. The final essay which is reviewed, Bonhoeffer never developed. It touches upon problems which are peculiar to American Christianity. While Bonhoeffer's ideas reflect his debt to Barth's seminal work, his approach bears the impress of his own unique thinking – more Lutheran in outlook than Barth.

"Christ, Reality and Good"

Analysis and Explication

The stated goal of this essay is to address the subject of ethics, specifically to explore the idea of the nature of good from truly Christian-evangelical presuppositions. As will be seen, Bonhoeffer's pursuit of this goal leads in a direction that is immediately and directly related to the interest in this thesis. This is suggested from the outset by the editor's identification of the discussion provided in brackets under the title "(Christ the church and the World)." His enquiry into the nature of goodness, leads Bonhoeffer to the question of Christ's relation to the world and then to the church's relation to the world. How he formulates these connections and the precision and care he takes to parse the distinctions so that they neither dissolve nor harden into divisions, is considered to be highly instructive and significant to the interests germane to this study. The following analysis and explication does not aim at representing every application of Bonhoeffer's premise. Rather, it focuses on capturing the basic logic of Bonhoeffer's argument and the central development he gives it.

Beginning with the question central in the study of ethics, "How can I be good? and How can I do good?" which are related to the goal of making the world "good through my actions," Bonhoeffer introduces a contrasting question from which he insists "Christian ethics" must start.[1] This question focuses upon a larger issue, "What is ultimate reality"? to commence upon an enquiry into good in-and-of- itself, in human life and endeavors, and in society and the world, is an abstraction. It is to parcel off the matter of good from reality-ultimate and true reality. "If the ethical problem presents itself essentially in the form of enquiries about one's own being good and doing good, this means it has been decided that it is the self and the world which are ultimate reality."[2]

Ultimate reality is God. Not merely God as God in-and-of-Godself (that is, from an inquiry of God's inner being), if such were possible, but God understood in relationship to this world ("Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer") and this world in relation to this particular God.[3] Goodness first and foremost pertains not to the subject of what is morally necessary, accessible and possible in the world, but to God who reveals Godself in goodness towards this world. By elevating God as the locus of good, the world is not here being "sublimated" and ethics being side-stepped.[4] Rather, ethics is integrated into ultimate reality. Reality and good are united rather than the good being approached from an abstract point of enquiry. "Any perception or apprehension of things or laws without Him is now abstraction, detachment from the origin and goal."[5] "Any enquiry about one's own goodness or the goodness of the world is now impossible unless enquiry has been first made about the goodness of God. For without God, what meaning could there be in a goodness of man and a goodness of the world?"[6] "The point of departure for Christian ethics is not the reality of one's own self, or the reality of the world; nor is it the reality of standards and values. It is the reality of God..."[7]

The starting point of Bonhoeffer's ethics is God, that is to say, God *in* Jesus Christ, i.e., God in relationship to the world. Inquiry into the nature of good must not take place in abstraction and independence to God who is *ultimate* reality. Because God has revealed himself in history in Jesus Christ to be the God of this world and to have reconciled the world to himself, then human good has to do with humans' correspondence to or "participation in" this reality ("divine reality").[8] Ethics turns on the issue of alignment versus "detachment with reality. The question of good becomes

the question of participation in the divine reality which is revealed in Christ. As such, it is holistic in its scope. The question of good embraces man with his motives and purposes with his fellow-men and with the entire creation *around him*..."[9] "In Jesus Christ, the reality of God entered into the reality of this world."[10] "The place where the answer is given both to the question concerning the reality of God and to the question concerning the reality of the world, is designated solely and alone by the name Jesus Christ. God and the world are comprised in his name. In Him all things consist (Col 1:17). Henceforth, one can speak neither of God nor of the world without speaking of Jesus Christ. All concepts of reality which do not take account of Him are abstractions.[11]

Approaching good from this christocentric logic led Bonhoeffer to attack ethical dualism and emphasize the connectedness of God and the world. The gospel of Christ discloses God to be inextricably joined to this world and the world joined to God. The attempt to be near God but removed from the world (pietism), and the attempt to be involved ethically in the world but be indifferent to God and apart from God (secularism), are both equally contradicted by the gospel. Because the world is already "sustained, accepted and reconciled" by God - claimed by God, a spirituality which is known by a separation from the word and a removal into a sanctified sphere set apart and over against the world, is disallowed.[12] Christian ethics requires a worldly involvement which is guided by efforts toward the realization of that reality which has been effected in Jesus Christ. "Christian ethics enquires about the realization in our world of this divine and cosmic reality which is in Christ..."[13]

The conception that posits two spheres in the world, one good, the other evil, or one secular and profane, the other holy, one natural and the other supernatural, falsely divides the world and polarizes it. "...The whole reality of the world is already drawn into Christ and bound together in Him, and the movement of history consists solely in divergence and convergence in relation to this centre."[14] Here, the distinction between the world and Christianity is that Christianity is about the realization in the life of humankind of that which is already the reality and destiny of this world and humanity manifested in history in Jesus Christ. Christianity properly understood, is not fundamentally about a different sphere where God and good come to be embodied in time. Christianity pertains not to the world becoming something other than that which already is the reality of the world - reality defined theocentrically and

christocentrically.

What this signifies is that Christianity and the world are united, mutually related. "No static independence" the one from the other is warranted.[15] If the world presumes a secular autonomy, the church witnesses to the fact that the world's existence is sustained by and for a divine power and purpose other than is evident from an analysis within the world itself. If the church attempts to exist apart from the world or "in static predominance" over the world by formally connecting the world to its "Christian" laws or eternal religious principles, so called, it denies the gospel. In response to this, the world will rebel and throw off the "Christian" yoke. Neither party can rightfully take upon itself the prerogative of an intrinsic right and power to dominate the other.[16] Bonhoeffer is clear that neither party can rightfully separate from the other nor control the other.

In Bonhoeffer's logic, there is no sphere in the world that escapes the definition that God in Christ has placed upon human reality. Not even the darkest ghetto of human ignorance and evil or the region where the demonic reigns apparently intractable in its hold over men and women falls outside this definition. "The dark and evil world must not be abandoned to the devil. It must be claimed for Him who has won it by his incarnation, His death and His resurrection. Christ gives up nothing of what he has won. He holds it fast in His hands. It is Christ , therefore who renders inadmissable the dichotomy of a bedeviled and a Christian world. Any static delimitation of a region which belongs to the devil and a region which belongs to Christ is a denial of the reality of God's having reconciled the world with Himself in Christ."[17]

If the church fails to stand in the relatedness that is herein referred, and if, in practice, it weakens this unity or severs it, there are consequences to both parties. "A Christianity which withdraws from the world falls victim to the unnatural and the irrational to presumption and self-will..."[18] "A world which stands by itself in isolation from the law of Christ, falls victim to license and self-will."[19]

After building his argument for unity, Bonhoeffer turns to the question of the nature of the distinction that exists between the world and Christianity. While not a separated "sphere," the church does indeed occupy a definite space in the world.[20] Here he refers to its public worship, parish life and her organizations.[21] The church is not simply a "spiritual force" in the world.[22] It does possess a "visible" character. It is

precisely this visible character and the fact that it does inhabit particular space that often gives rise to the mistaken view that there are two spheres. This dualism must be overcome theologically. The space in the world that the church inhabits is to be understood as a distinction within a greater unity. "The church is the place where testimony and serious thought are given to God's reconciliation of the world with Himself and Christ, to his having so loved the world that he gave his Son for its sake. The space of the church is not there in order to try to deprive the world of a piece of its territory but precisely in order to prove to the world that it is still the world, the world which is loved by God and reconciled with him."[23] The church's separate space then, does not reflect its own soteriological prerogative or power whereby it sets itself up in competition to the world, introducing a thorough going cleavage in the world. Nor does it justify assuming a hegemonic role over the world. Rather, it reflects the salvation of the world that is grounded in God. Rightly perceived when the world encounters the distinct particularity of the church, it learns something about the arrival of the universal destiny of the world in Christ, not something about a holy enclave separated and saved from the evil world. The church must find through the gospel and the guidance of the Spirit, a differentiated posture toward the world within a larger framework of shared unity; it must find and incarnate this in its witness and mission and in the shape and character of its distinct societal existence.

The radicalism with which Bonhoeffer presses his logic, is seen by his insistence that the world is already part of the body of Christ. "...The concept of the body of Christ... is not... intended primarily as representing the separation of the church from the world. On the contrary,... all men are taken up, enclosed and borne within the body of Christ and this is just what the congregation of the faithful are to make known to the world..."[24] "What is intended," in this 'making known,' "is not separation from the world but the summoning of the world into the fellowship of this Body of Christ, to which it already belongs."[25] Here it is clear that the act of formulating the church's distinction from the world serves to witness to, realize and demonstrate the true character of the world's unity.

It is important to stress what does and does not underpin the unity of the church and the world in Bonhoeffer's thinking. This is not a natural unity. It is not shared common humanity that is the point of connection. This would lead to the church's self-understanding on religious grounds, whereby its distinction could be

accounted for because it is a variable within the spread of different dimensions and expressions of culture. If the church's visible existence is explainable from an anthropological or sociological analysis, its difference bespeaks an underlying unity grounded in the nature of humanity and society. In such an explanation, unity with the world and a visible distinction among or within that could be descriptive of the visible church. The first problem with such an arrangement of unity and distinction is, that neither the church nor the world are placed in dialectical correspondence to truth outside of themselves as discussed in the Barth essay. In such a scenario, there is nothing to prevent the world from conceiving and formulating itself as a political or social entity grounded in itself. Viewed from this perspective, the church is also deprived of its transcendent sourcing and therefore made vulnerable to slipping into an uncritical identification with the world in its social and cultural developments. When the church's distinction is conceived of as a variable of an underlying *natural* unity with the world, it ultimately serves that unity and lacks fundamental critical differentiating power.

In this essay, Bonhoeffer is absolutely sure that the church must not form or understand itself in separation from the world. He goes to great lengths to emphasize the underlying unity of church and world before taking up the task of nuancing the distinctions. By making this underlying unity rest on theological Christological foundations rather than natural foundation, he is able to guarantee that the world will be (actually is) in the grip of a destiny from which it cannot extricate itself. Dualism allows the world to persist safely in its pseudo autonomous course. Universalism, not natural universalism or ecclesiastical universalism, but Christological universalism, compromises the apparent independence and autonomy of the world. Theoretically speaking, Bonhoeffer has touched on a great truth in this point. This is so, because the world's autonomy, so called, is "safe" so long as the church's relationship to the world is ill-formed and misunderstood. The fiction of the world's independence lives on as truth, so long as the church's relation to the world lacks evangelical integrity.

To even the less than attentive reader, it is obvious that Bonhoeffer has taken great care to nuance the character of the church's distinction from the world in such a way as not to be construed as constituting a division or separation from the world. Because he has sought to understand the distinction of the church from the world, by examining the peculiar character of the unity of the church and the world (unity

precedes distinction) he is able to inform them appropriately. ["...The relation of the church to the world is determined entirely by the relation of God to the world."[26]] His development in this regard primarily points in two directions: one regarding the distinctive character of the church's mission to the world, the other regarding the special character of its life "apart" from the world. As pointed out, these two may be reduced to their simplest definition (within the categories of this discussion) as witness to the world to the Christological universalism of the world and social embodiment of this universalism in the formation of the visible church community. Obviously, these two cannot be separated as they partake each from the other.

It is especially interesting to note, in light of the interpretive paradigm which guides the historical analysis in the body of this dissertation (fixity and freedom), how Bonhoeffer's premise leads him to a categorical rejection of that tendency in the church towards "fixity." When the church's relationship is wholly determined by God's relationship to the world in Christ, it cannot form itself toward the world other than according to what is consistent to this relationship.[27] This means that since "the world belongs to Christ... it has need of nothing less than Christ himself. Everything would be ruined if one were to try to reserve Christ for the church and allow the world only some kind of law, even if it were a Christian law. Christ died for the world... only unbelief can wish to give the world less than Christ. Certainly, it may have well-intentioned pedagogical motives for this course, but these motives always have a certain flavour of clerical exclusiveness."[28]

If by some misunderstanding, the church were able to construe some grounds whereby it could justify and legitimatize its independence from the world, ostensibly by resorting to higher religious spiritual warrants superior to the world, it would succeed in instituting two spheres. In this, it would inevitably make higher claims for its own sphere. The result of this bifurcation, Bonhoeffer points out, would be conflict. Division creates conflict. It possesses no underlying unity. "If the Christian sector presents itself as an independent entity, then the world is denied that fellowship into which God entered with the world in Jesus Christ. A Christian law is established which condemns the law of the world and is maintained in an irreconcilable struggle against the world which God reconciled with Himself. Law always engenders lawlessness; nomism leads to anti-nomianism; perfectionism to libertinism.[29]

"On the Possibility of the Word of the Church to the World"

Bonhoeffer organizes this essay around a question that he recognizes has become a concern among many Christians during his day. This question is one of the church's "word of solution" which it addresses to the world's problems; problems which arise out of the social, economic, political, sexual and educational character of modern life.[30] Evidently, among Bonhoeffer's Lutheran colleagues, the sentiment persisted that mere preaching of Christian Orthodoxy was not sufficient. "Concrete instruction" must be directed to the "concrete situation." This, he says, is what many believe is the great need of the church.[31] "... The church must offer solutions for the unsolved problems of the world, and thereby fulfill her mission and restore her authority." [32]

Bonhoeffer engages this claim in a series of responses. First, he questions whether there are Christian solutions for worldly problems. He says, "It is obviously an error... that Christianity has a solution for *all* the social and political problems of the world, so that one would need only to listen to these Christian answers to bring the world into good shape."[33] He does not deny that Christianity has something to say on worldly matters, but he does deny that it has at its disposal a Christian solution for all worldly problems. "...The question of the extent to which the church is called to solve worldly problems"[34] must be given earnest thought. This prospect of Christian answers to world problems, Bonhoeffer writes, recalls a cryptic phrase by Luther, "God in *their* hand."[35]

For instance, "Jesus concerns himself hardly at all with the solution of worldly problems."[36] "His word is not an answer to human questions and problems; it is the answer of God to the question of God to man. His word is essentially determined not from below but from above." [37] "The way of Jesus Christ... leads not from the world to God but from God to the world. This means that the essence of the gospel does not lie in the solution of human problems and the solution of human problems cannot be the essential task of the church."[38] "It [The Word] is not a solution but a redemption."[39] The origin of this word does not arise out of a preoccupation with a human dilemma defined as the disunion of a world split between good and evil, but the "unity of the Son with the Father's Will."[40] This word lies "Beyond" all human problems[41] and comes as a message of redemption. For Bonhoeffer, this does not mean that human problems are not given any resolution, but that resolution is found in

a different "plane" or framework.[42] It is a matter not of the church being aloof from the world and its problems and evil. Rather, it is the point of departure from which these problems are encountered or addressed.[43]

Furthermore, he queries whether these worldly problems "are to be and can be solved" as such. Returning to a way of reasoning resembling a Lutheran second use of the law, Bonhoeffer suggests that it may be that the "unsolved state of these problems is of more importance to God than their solution, for it may serve to call attention to the fall of man and to the divine redemption." It may be that in their present representation, current problems are "wrongly formulated."[44] If the biblical depiction of the nature and predicament of humanity is in tension with Enlightenment cultural assumptions, how could an easy translation of the Christian salvation to modern problems occur?

Bonhoeffer reminds the reader that "Christian [and "worldly"] answers to malignant social problems betray their weaknesses by their ambiguous, if not problematic results. "The abolition of slavery coincided with the coming into being of the British industrial proletariat." ("It might be said the world will have its due.")[45] Prohibition (forced by Methodists) "led to worse experiences than those of the preceding period."[46] "The League of Nations was intended to overcome national antagonisms, but its result was to intensify them to the highest pitch."[47]

Bonhoeffer's essay, however, is not just critical. It is intended to be constructive. He aims at making clear the relationship that the church is to have to the world and its problems. That is to say, the *church's* relation to the world, not the way the world would draw the church into relation to itself and its needs and problems.

In answer to this challenge, Bonhoeffer returns to the "new" evangelical "ordo salutis" coming into prominence on the continent at that time (discussed in depth in section B). His logic is as follows: The church's relation and word to the world, corresponds to God's word and relation to the world. God's word and relation to the world is not "direct" or "immediate" [in the proper theological qualification of these terms]. "It is in Jesus Christ that God's relation to the world is defined. We know of no relation of God to the world other than through Jesus Christ."[48]

What this means in part, is that the church must approach the human dilemma, however it is historically formed, from a different starting point, a different reference. It is not a matter of being absent per se from a particular worldly dilemma-problem. It

is a matter of being "absent" from the normative worldly criteria of examination, evaluation and resolution of given problems. "In other words, the proper relation of the church to the world, cannot be deduced from natural law or rational law or from universal human rights, but *only* from the gospel of Jesus Christ."[49]

Building on this premise, Bonhoeffer proceeds to identify what relating to and speaking to the world through Jesus Christ involves. Because the gospel is universal in character in that it is about the love of God for the world in Christ, the coming Kingdom of God in Christ and God's judgement against unbelief, the church's relation to the world takes the shape of proclamation and a call to belief, conversion and preparation.[50]

Because the gospel is about God's love for the world in Christ, the church is to be in a relation of responsibility to the world in "word and action, bearing witness to this love.[51] Here Bonhoeffer lays emphasis on the importance of responsible acts of love by the church to the world; a genuine care and involvement which images God's love. It is this responsibility which "answers to the love of God for the world."[52]

The gospel means that the church cannot merely be present and related to the world in the posture of law [righteous imperatives], moral judgements on sin and cultural wickedness and corruption.[53] Being related to the world, i.e. morally "righteously" or "religiously" is foreign to the gospel. In the gospel, law and grace cannot be separated. To be present at any given situation in one form without the other form, is foreign to the God who meets us in Jesus Christ where judgement and love are inseparable.

This in turn means that the church does not have two different standards or values on ethical requirements, one for the church and one for the world. There exists no "double Christian morality."[54] What Bonhoeffer is polemicizing in this section of his essay is the idea that there exists independent legal institutions and conventions that possess absolute principles of morality. The claims upholding the right for property, marriage, life, honor do not stand on their own outside of the gospel, as if they possessed an intrinsic authority. If this were the case, then the church may well set itself up in society in a posture of a moral vanguard on natural moral law and human right. Quite to the contrary, the gospel transforms all morality and human right (whether derived from the Mount Sinai or Mount of Blessings and the sayings of the Gospels), making it subservient, conditional and relative to a higher claim.[55] So called

natural rights and laws are not legitimated by fact of creation, nor do they heal and harmonize human life by virtue of conformity to them. The gospel challenges the absoluteness of these. Absolute claims to the protection and enjoyment of the rights of property, honour and life inevitably lead to idolatry and dehumanization. These cannot be viewed as grounded in humanity, but within the greater framework of service, obedience, worship and glory to God. In this framework, their presence or absence achieves a certain relativity and purposefulness.[56]

Equally so, the life of sacrifice is nothing until and unless it exists to the glory of God and free service to God. The church is to consistently address the world from this Christological standpoint. If it becomes intoxicated with a moral religious calling, although happily applauded by segments of culture and the status quo, it is not the church which is faithful to Jesus Christ.

Bonhoeffer presses his evangelical logic further in an effort to show how it informs the church's interest in the state and secular institutions. The task of the church is neither indifferent to or idealistic about the existence of secular institutions. Because the gospel discloses that Jesus Christ is coming again bringing the Kingdom of God, the way must be prepared for that.[57] Therefore, it matters to the church how the orders of the world are formed and the way in which power is exercised - so they present no obstacle to the way of faith..... "She (the church) must oppose every concrete order which constitutes an offense to faith in Jesus Christ, and in doing this, she defines, at least negatively, the limits for an order within which faith and Jesus Christ and obedience are possible."[58] This may require the church to polemicize earthly conditions arising from social and economic attitudes which "destroy the true character of man in the world" and present a "hindrance to faith in Christ."[59]

Neither is it the place of the church to absolutize itself as if it held within itself that which could build a "concrete earthly order which follows as a necessary consequence from faith in Jesus Christ..."[60] "The church possesses no doctrine of her own which is valid in itself with regard to eternal institutions and natural and human rights.[61]

Bonhoeffer insists there exists no independent human and natural rights and the church has no business becoming naively or idealistically aligned with their advocacy. There is no such thing as independent man/woman "... all created things exist for the sake of Jesus Christ and consist in him (col 1:16 ff)."[62] For this reason, in

the strictest sense, secular institutions do not possess an independent autonomy grounded in the fact of their existence. A qualified autonomy may be justified because "... the heteronomy of an ecclesiastical theocracy"[63] is at cross purposes with the gospel. As such, the church views and relates to the autonomy of world orders and institutions from a relative posture. It knows these stand under the judgement of God and are to serve ends related to the destiny of the world revealed in Jesus Christ.

"Protestantism Without Reformation"
A Summary of Bonhoeffer's Critique of American Protestantism's Relation to Religious Liberty

Toward the end of his brief stay in America (in 1939) Bonhoeffer began to compose an essay reporting on American Christianity as he perceived it. The title he chose for his reflections was "Protestantism without Reformation." The following is a summary of one particular section of his thoughts which is related to aspects of the analysis presented in Chapters One through Six.

The decision of the early Protestant settlers that came to America was one to break from the "confessional struggle" in Europe and assert their Christian freedom. This Bonhoeffer recognizes was a step freighted with risk and cost. This was not merely a fleeing from the creedal conflict, but a courageous enunciation of Christian freedom as a necessary response to it which involved suffering and hardship.

The problem Bonhoeffer surmises is when a "right won at the risk of their lives, becomes for the children a general Christian rule."[64] He recognized that there is latent poison, an ironic contradiction inherent in the transition from Christian freedom as a right struggled for and won, to right as a policy which becomes a "normal and ideal state of Christianity." It is not the existence of this freedom that is itself the problem but that the heirs come to "misunderstand" this freedom.[65] The first is contextual (mandated by conscience and constrained by the word of God), while the second is general.

The misunderstanding which develops is that of a relativism with regards to the creed. In other words there ensues a climate in which passion and struggle for truth is considered "unchristian" and Christianity itself is disassociated from truth (and correlated to works). While for the early generation the confessional struggle led

to the truth of conscience to confess as one must to the later generation it came to be the "law" of religious pluralism and the negation of robust Christian truth claims. The arrival of this condition is the fact that Christianity is able to exist in a world by virtue of a peace it has not won. The subtlety is that religious liberty creates a parallelism characterized by thee absence of conflict or struggle between Christianity and its world. The lesson which America learned from European confessional struggles was in the end not the correct lesson at all. Religious liberty led to the privatization and relativization of truth claims. Americans became more interested in religion and its personal and social impact than in the world of God.[66]

Religious freedom like other freedom means for America the "possibility of unhindered activity" ("given by the world to the church").[67] What is evident from American pulpits, Bonhoeffer observed, is that the American church anathematizes all limitation of freedom and idealizes the possibilities inherent in the existence of their religious liberty. But he urges that this is naive, since "The freedom of the church is not where it has possibilities, but only where the gospel really and in its own power, makes room for itself on earth, even and precisely when no such possibilities are offered to it. The *essential* freedom of the church in the world never arises from the world as grant (or the church forcing the world to ensure that provision of freedom), but from the word of God so unfolded within a particular concrete historical setting, that it "gains a hearing."[68] The word of God interfaced with the world or within a particular world, gains a hearing and following and as such a real place is created for the church which is won. The word of God is always and continually the source of the church's true freedom. If however the church relies on its place in the world by virtue of its formal historical grant of freedom, it "slips back into the world."[69]

The logical risk of the church in the American situation is secularization; an identification of the church with the world while the opposite setting in which no formal grant of freedom exists serves to resist that identification.

Freedom defined as possibility and freedom in reality are two different entities. The latter derives from the word of God alone. The inherent risk and temptation in institutional freedom is the sacrifice of essential freedom.

A particular political order may have built-in provisions to guarantee its relativity so that there is space for other expressions of individuality or collectivity, but in truth only the word of God judges, limits and relativizes political and cultural

expressions of power and order. The church lives and is free by this word not once and for all time, but only as it is continually brought up against the world.

Section D

"History"

H.R. Niebuhr

In his book, *The Kingdom of God in America,* H. Richard Niebuhr developed a theological paradigm for understanding the history of American Protestantism's relationship to the new world. Building on insights he gained from Barth (and historical insights gained from Troeltsch) Niebuhr attempted to show that the challenge that faced Protestantism in colonial and republican America was to construct a new kind of connection between Christianity and society. From the beginning, America was moving toward separation of church and state with its concomitant to a religious pluralism and a secular public social sphere. Niebuhr summarizes the risks that were endemic to this new arrangement as "separatism,"[1] a term he uses to describe a Christianity-world dualism and "secularism,"[2] a term he uses to describe Christianity becoming uncritically identified with the world. He also mentions sectarianism as a risk.

The structure of Niebuhr's thought is best seen by viewing it within the exigencies created by church-state separation. The end of the Erastian and Constantinian arrangements meant that Christianity and the world (understood as a socio-political entity) became formally distinct. If the two entities were to be prevented from cleavage in America or reconnecting in a new kind of unity, a religio-national and cultural synthesis (religio vs. ecclesio-political) a third entity needed to be identified which, when interposed "between" them, created a new kind of connection which preserved distinction. Viewed methodologically, what Niebuhr did was to identify this third category and attribute to it a major role in the new world arrangement.

In attempting to understand American religious and political development, Niebuhr insisted that three entities needed to be understood in their relationship with each other. These three were the church(es), the world (i.e., the socio-political realm) and the Kingdom of God. By giving to the Kingdom of God a distinct place and meaning, Niebuhr provided Protestantism with a new way of understanding their

involvement with modern society, historically and in the present. His approach also provided them with a realistic way to view the modern socio-cultural project. This is made clearer by discussing how Niebuhr understood the Kingdom of God and its dynamics.

The Kingdom of God, according to Niebuhr, designates the direct rule of God over the world in the exercise of His will and judgements. It is God's saving, judging, destroying and redeeming power at work in the world. While this Kingdom's presence had been largely hidden from people in past ages, "in Jesus Christ it was revealed in a convincing fashion and began a new career among men."[3] According to Niebuhr, there are three characteristics which describe this work of God: vividness or primacy, nearness or immediacy and absoluteness.[4]

"Vividness" or "primacy" is best understood in contrast to mediatorial. In God's dealings with humanity, God is free, sovereign and transcendent. At no time does God alter this way of being *present*. God does not deputize God's power, prerogative or word. No individual, book, institution, religious, social or political body can claim to incarnate God, speak directly for God or embody God's will and purpose. God is not mystically or rationally lodged in nature or history. Neither is God's power or prerogative officially lodged in the church. The Reformation, Niebuhr argued, was gripped by the conviction that God communicated Godself and His will. According to God's own initiative and spirit, God speaks. Even though God uses scripture, the church, sundry events and judgements and supremely the Gospel of Jesus Christ, these do not function autonomously and independently. When God uses these, the individual hears God and her attention is focused past these to God.

The immediacy of the Kingdom of God is best understood in contrast to the idea that God's rule belongs to the far off future or eternal realm. Kingdom is not equatable with God's will once and for all recorded in a timeless static heaven. As Protestants became aware of God's sovereignty and the immediate character of God's word and power [power to justify and forgive for instance], they increasingly began to see their lives directly under God, his word, will and providence. With this awareness came an increased conviction of God's direct rule over human affairs. God's saving, judging and redeeming reign was occurring. The present, like the future, was under the grip of the Kingdom of God. This led to great expectations and a sense of imminence.

Absoluteness describes the finality and scope of the reign and will of God. There is no sphere in life that is exempt from God's judging, saving, activity. Ecclesiastical, political, social and cultural formations like individuals are not autonomous. They are subject to the judgements and sovereign will of God. As such, they are relative and temporal. Only the Kingdom of God is absolute. Just as no sacred sphere exists which is able to claim identity with God, there is no secular sphere that lies outside of the redeeming will of God. The Kingdom of God is universal. The "absoluteness" of the Kingdom emphasizes that at all points, this Kingdom does not organize around and relativize itself according to the interests, plans and schemes of peoples and nations. Peoples and nations encounter the Kingdom of God and change their course.

When this working definition of the Kingdom of God is returned to the two fold problem which Niebuhr saw was endemic to America as a post-Constantinian, post-Erastian experiment [i.e. secularism and separatism], a different history between Christianity and the world becomes recognizable. In light of the Kingdom of God, Protestantism could not justly translate the separation (of society and church) into separatism. The entire thrust of the Kingdom of God is to draw all human formulations, individual and collective, under the judging redeeming will of God which is universal in its scope. The church serves this end as a witness. While it cannot claim to be the will and word of God on earth, it can and must point to God, to the finality of God's grace, judgement and will. The church confronts individuals and institutions with the reality of this will and it attempts to formulate itself in light of it. To the extent that the church is faithful to its calling and identity, it exists not as the Kingdom of God, but for the Kingdom of God. In other words, for Niebuhr, as for Bonhoeffer, there is no holy sphere to which the church may lay claim. The sphere in which the messianic Kingdom of God has come and is coming is the world. When the church fails to fully reckon with the Kingdom of God as a divine worldly phenomenon, then the church tends to separate from the world and a world secularism results. When the church uncritically identifies a particular socio-cultural or political project with the Kingdom of God or confuses the values of these as the values of the Kingdom of God, then a Christian secularism results. In secularism, there is a surrender to culture,[5] a collapse of distinction from the world on the part of Christianity. The idea of church as a distinct entity finds its importance with respect to

secularism. "Church" is the way Christianity stays in contact with the greater socio-cultural world without becoming identified with it. Functionally, "church" exists to guarantee Christianity's differentiation as the grounds for a proper connection with the world. This will be developed a little later in this essay.

While not in so many words as were just phrased, Niebuhr wants the reader to discover with him the hermeneutic which explains and justifies Protestantism's history and struggle in the new world. The separation of church and state that led to pluralism and sectarianism was not all "spots and jumps."[6] There has been a logic behind Christianity's development in America. The key to understanding this logic is the Kingdom of God viewed as a dynamic at work in the world which the churches and religious movements serve.

If Protestants could claim more for themselves, they could rightly attempt to wed the world to themselves or separate from the world. If the church could claim to be the sphere in which God's will and word was embodied, it could rightly tolerate a Christian vacuum in the world. Theoretically, the church could then be content with world secularism. If the church could claim to possess the will and word of God either by virtue of tradition or the Bible [that is, its understanding of the Bible], it could rightly be tempted to fill a hegemonic and authoritative role in the world. But Niebuhr is quick to point out that the logic of the Kingdom of God, which he argues is the seminal logic of Protestantism, forbids identifying even the Bible and its contents with God's will and word.[7] At all times and occasions, God remains in jurisdiction of his word. Only through the spirit is God's word ultimately made known. And at all points, God leads those who encounter his word back to its original source - to Godself. When Protestants are true to their roots, they see the world in the grip of the Kingdom of God which Christ has brought and is bringing the world under. All individual, social, cultural and political entities which are organized in independence and opposition to God are subject to the crisis which the Kingdom of God brings into the world.

Rather than coming into the world through natural growth and development, the Kingdom of God gains control of this world through confrontation, crisis and God's passion in Jesus Christ. It is not the revolution of science and reason over nature and ignorance or religion and morality over irreligion. The Kingdom is a struggle between divine and human will organized independently of God and

organized in ways that are destructive of human community. Through Jesus Christ, divine love, grace and passionate Will collide with the perversity and destructiveness of human will. The new is then born through repentance, death to self, through love, forgiveness and redemptive suffering that occurs because of God's judgement. Through Jesus Christ, Niebuhr argues, God has introduced a revolution into the world. That revolution is the Kingdom of God.

Because the Kingdom of God has come and is coming, no political, cultural or ecclesial formulation is secure and stable in itself. Neither is it the role of Christianity to supply social stability through its institutional, religious or moral resources. Christianity's task is to expose itself and the world around it to the coming Kingdom of God that requires a new kind of social, cultural, political and individual formulation.

The essence of American Protestantism, according to Niebuhr, is recognized in how they organized themselves ecclesiastically and politically. In both these spheres, their interest was to limit power and authority. This was not because they were believers in human freedom, but because they would not allow these institutions to usurp their boundaries so as to function at cross-purposes with the Kingdom of God. Niebuhr argues that the Protestant contribution to the republican movement, a contribution that preceded the Enlightenment contribution, sprang directly from the initial Reformation polemic against the medieval church.[8] This challenge was no mere reaction against the abuse of authority. The Reformers relativized the claims of the Medieval church by appealing to higher claims which they identified as the word of God. It was from this beginning that the idea of the Kingdom of God (i.e., the sovereignty of God) made its way into modern time. Through the Reformers, a revolutionary critical principal was introduced into the world. Protestant political-national and ecclesiological projects are efforts to transform a critical principle into a constructive one. The key to understanding American Protestants' contribution to, and logic behind, the modern world is the idea of the limitation of power and authority in juxtaposition to the evangelical proclamation of the Kingdom of God as a Kingdom of grace. There is in Niebuhr's exposition a synergism between these two but no synthesis.

That Protestantism contributed to the rise of the modern world is not in question for Niebuhr. Both in the sequence of historical events and in thought,

Protestantism provided the basic resources necessary for an ecclesiastical and political transition. However, the point of contact which the Protestant logic has with modern ideas of individual and democratic freedom is not fundamentally idealistic. That is to say, the logic behind Protestantism's "revolutionary principle" does not spring from the potential that freedom is thought to possess for human development and dignity.[9] It is not motivated by premises which conclude that maximizing individual liberty increases individual creativity, scientific and technological advancement and economic prosperity. Rather, the Kingdom of God demands that ecclesiastical and political institutions be constructed on a more provisional and relative basis. This is not so much a gesture of good will to the Kingdom of God; a making room for it. Individuals and institutions are called to reinvent themselves in such a way as to be compatible and function in concert with this present and coming reign. As such, the essential Protestant logic behind the new world has little interest in the transference of power from institutions to individuals as an end in itself. It is not enamoured with the possibilities that are thought to ensue from such a transaction in and of itself.

Niebuhr views America's colonial and national history from this perspective. The evangelical awakenings in the middle eighteenth century and early nineteenth century sustained a dialectical relation to rigid ecclesiastical and political institutions. Evangelicalism emerged at a time when loyalties to these institutions were being and had been challenged. As these loyalties weakened or were forsaken, evangelical revivals called many to a new transcendent loyalty.[10]

The power of these revivals and the fact that they were a widespread phenomena, gave Protestants a sense of ecumenicity and a sense that God's Kingdom was coming in their midst and their time.[11] In its early period, the Jonathan Edwards period, and early nineteenth century, the emphasis was on the coming Kingdom. They had seen its power and were more expectant of its full arrival.[12] In the early nineteenth century, Niebuhr argues that evangelical Protestantism sought to expose their social and cultural world to the claims of the sovereignty of God. The problem that plagued their efforts was twofold. First they had an individualistic view of humanity. Their view of the individual and society lacked communal depth.[13] They did not understand the interdependence of human existence and the impact of socio-cultural structures. Second, they increasingly came to confuse the Kingdom of God with the national and cultural entities that had evolved in the new world.[14]

Niebuhr argues that after the second Great Awakening, many Protestants lost the vivid awareness of the Kingdom of God. The idea of the Kingdom gradually lost its strange abrasive divine character. Instead of viewing the Kingdom as a transcendent critical yet gracious reality, it began to be seen in terms of a harmonious, sublime, peaceable and moral world in which the "brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God" prevailed.[15] This view involved "no discontinuities, no crises, no tragedies or sacrifices, no loss of all things, no cross and resurrection."[16] After the Civil War, the idea of the Kingdom was increasingly robbed of its dialectical element. It was a fulfillment of promise without judgement. It was thought to be growing out of a present so that no great crisis needed intervene between the order of grace and the order of glory. [It had a] one-sided view of progress, which saw the growth of the wheat but not of the tares, the gathering of the grain but not the burning of the chaff, this liberalism was indeed naively optimistic." "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgement through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.[17] What happened was that an identity between earthly religious, social and political achievements and the Kingdom of God began to form in the minds of many Protestants. This change Niebuhr attributes to corrosive effects of time on the good that follows in the train of the Kingdom of God. When the truth and power of the Kingdom of God is known and experienced at particular times, it brings change to individuals and society. Over time, these changes settle and become institutionalized and eventually began to be viewed as ends and goods in themselves. It is much like the proverbial dog running along a stream with a piece of meat in its mouth. Upon seeing the reflection of the meat in the water, the dog becomes confused, drops the meat and lunges for the reflection. In fact, Niebuhr describes the situation in this light when he writes, "The contemplation of their own righteousness filled Americans with such lofty and enthusiastic sentiments that they readily identified it with the righteousness of God... Henceforth, the Kingdom of the Lord was a human possession not a permanent revolution."[18] This analysis concurs with that provided by Winthrop Hudson, which was cited earlier.[19]

As the nineteenth century progressed, American Protestantism became increasingly enamoured by the effects, i.e., the fruit that Christianity could and did produce. They became less anchored in the objective and transcendent realities behind those fruits. As a result, a false identity between Christianity and the new socio-

political world which had emerged, occurred.

One of the consequences of this identity was how Christianity began to function in the new nation. As will be seen from the following discussion taken from Niebuhr's Kingdom paradigm, this function resembles the categories employed in this thesis which are referred to as the regulative and integrative. Niebuhr's logic is that Christianity, bereft of its dialectical relation to the world [a relation which is maintainable only by Christianity under the influence of the transcendent idea of the Kingdom of God], inevitably forms a direct unilateral relation to the world (or a dualistic relation). In this setting, it [Christianity] seeks to bring society directly into relation to itself, its laws and values, biblical morals - in short, its religion. It seeks to sustain a direct connection between the world and its religion or parts of its religion. Niebuhr discerned this pattern in Protestantism as early as Lyman Beecher. Niebuhr writes:

> " The sovereign God of Lyman Beecher and his colleagues is an absentee monarch who declared his will in a remote past and caused it to be recorded in irrefrangible laws. To live under the sovereignty, as these church leaders seem to conceive it, is to live not in relation to divine being, but in obedience to law. They would interpret the fall of an apple from the tree not as due to the attraction of the large mass for the small, but as an act in obedience to the law of gravity. At all events in religion, they define the decrees of God as 'his determination to create a universe of free agents, to exist forever under the perfect laws of his moral government, perfectly administered..'. The sense of critical immediate relations between man and the Being of beings has been lost in the feeling that man is responsible for keeping certain laws. Moreover, these laws are conceived to have been once and for all established in nature and published in the Bible, so that the latter comes to be a book of statutes rather than an aid to the understanding of God's living will. It is not only the Bible which mediates the moral government of God, for the religious institutions founded upon that statute book may claim to represent his sovereignty also."[20]

The problem with the idea that Protestantism was to sustain a direct religious relation to the particular socio-cultural world it shares is evident when particular moral issues are raised. A prime example is the temperance issue which Protestants championed both in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Niebuhr, not unlike Perry Miller cited earlier,[21] points out the synergism between temperance reform and a democratic industrial society. It imperiled its individualistic and productive axis.[22] When Protestantism brought to bear its influence against this evil, "men were not

saved from the frustration, conflict and poverty of life which they sought to escape in the saloons; they were saved from whiskey."[23] How could Protestantism do anything but save men from whiskey except if it turned from moral crusade to confronting them with the transcendent claims of grace and love that brings in its wake its own moral revolution. Niebuhr argues that unlike medieval Catholicism, Protestantism does not have within its religious logic a view of morality that can be easily exploited for social uses. Morality in the Protestant view is not a "matter of behaviour, but an affair of faith and love, neither of which was subject to man's control.[24] When Protestantism's seminal logic is adhered to, there can be no categorical precision in Protestantism's moral life."[25] Protestantism lacks the "qualities necessary for organizing the lay life.[26] "It offered no standard whereby men could make choices between relative goods and relative ends. It gave no scale of values whereby their interests could be harmonized and the higher be made subject to the control of the lower. The Catholic critic seemed unanswerable when he said that Protestantism led to moral anarchy.[27]

The degeneration of Protestantism from a dialectical relation to society [i.e., Protestantism as instrument of witness to the Kingdom of God] to one of a direct relation of society [discernable by its reduction of religious authority to moral values and dogmas], inevitably renders it exploitable by social, economic and political powers and interests.[28]

It was the same spirit, Niebuhr argues, that eventually characterized the later development of liberalism. For liberalism "it was not God who ruled but religion ruled a little and religion needed God for its support."[29] Religion was remembered not as a prophetic and critical force in America's past, but as an integral building block to the modern world order. As such, liberalism employed reason and apologetics to prove its pragmatic value in the building and maintenance of America.[30] It attempted to establish its place by virtue of the fact that Protestantism hsitorically had played an important role in the birth of the nation and its liberal values. They insisted that there was a synergism between modernity and Protestant religion. This direct equation between Protestant religion and the success and health of the liberal social order is the substance of the regulative and integrative strategies sketched in the earlier chapters of this study. It is based on a historical memory that is almost correct. According to Niebuhr's logic, without a vision of the true Kingdom of God in America's past and present, it is inevitable that some would come to view Protestantism's connection to

America as one of supplying religio-moral resources and authority. This perspective is no doubt the source of many integrative and regulative strategies which continue to mark Protestantism's engagement with American society.

When the Kingdom of God is identified with a particular national and cultural phenomenon, the church must bear a share of the blame. It is the dialectical character of the gospel alone that guarantees that particular political, cultural or religious development and ideals will be kept in critical perspective. When any of these begin to be viewed as possessing independent values or having a historical perpetuity because of the truths or "principles" they embody or because the providential importance they are thought to have, it is likely a sign that the church has become too closely identified with the world it shares. The Kingdom of God is always in a dialectical tension with every sphere of human existence, and the church is Christ's chosen instrument of the Kingdom of God even though the church itself, like the world, is under its critical and redemptive rule. Niebuhr realized the importance of the interdependency of these three distinct entities. And he realized that the great problem that had evolved in American Protestantism was that it had become too closely identified with the modern institutions and values which Protestantism had played a major role in bringing into existence. It is in this context that Niebuhr's interest in and renewal of the Church is to be understood. He recognized that building the distinctive character, identity and life of the church was necessary if the church was to reclaim its proper focus. American mainstream Protestantism was "orbiting around the modern world and its values. If this fascination was to be broken, American Protestantism must reclaim its ecclesial integrity. As already stressed, this reclamation of its proper focus was not to be understood as a movement towards separatism but differentiation from the world. This movement of differentiation could not be accomplished by "cultic" means, that is to say, it could not be accomplished by focusing on the church, *its* importance, *its* authority, *its* values, *its* beliefs, *its* communal life and *its* uniqueness. The church, a particular or "parochial" phenomenon, is a proper response to a universal reality which precedes and transcends it.[31] When the church answers to the gospel, it is formulated in a dialectical away from and toward the world.

> "To represent the church idea which follows from divine sovereignty solely in terms of an ecclesia called out from the world is historically and theologically impossible. The direction of life toward a God who loved the world, created and redeemed it, requires of his people return to the world. The American

churches were involved from the beginning in this fundamental dialectic of Christianity in which all their predecessors had participated.

"Devotion to the same sovereign God who calls his people out of the world requires of them service to and in the world. So Puritans, separatists and Quakers who had fled the corruptions of secularized Christianity needed in turn to flee from the perils of a celestialized or spiritualized faith. In various ways they sought to fulfill the double yet not dualistic purpose of the Christian calling."[32]

In its relation to the world, Niebuhr urges the church must return to the question of how can it "be true to itself: that is, its Head."[33] This question involves facing again what the church is not. "It is not the savior but the company of those who have found a savior."[34] Therefore, the church's posture is not "self sufficient secure in righteousness, but dependent on God..."[35] This clarity alone will spare it from entering into a relationship to the world, which would betray a messianic vocation of utopic proportions, as if its job was to save civilization, save the culture from its corruption, save the nation, save the values of capitalism or save society from its injustices and poverty.[36]

This movement away from the world is described by Niebuhr as a turning of the church from the "temporal" toward the "eternal, so as to become fit again for its work in time."[37] Only a new withdrawal followed by a new aggression can save the church and restore to it the salt with which to savior society."[38] These metaphors are more to be understood in terms of the need of the church for "silence and quiet,"[39] reflection on its own sources and calling in the context of the seductive familiarity and urgency of its world with its claims, needs, and ideals. "The church tied to culture which it sponsored suffers corruption with it."[40] This is the heart of the church's task, "the liberation of the church from the bondage to a corrupt civilization."[41] In other words, Niebuhr is urging that the battle, if not won in the first move, is largely pre-determined. The church, once it achieves its proper differentiation (as long as that is not exploited for separatism), is in a position of strength with the world. This, he assures the reader, is a gracious occurence not to be understood as the reward of cultural monasticism. In fact, he is clear to say that this metaphorical purification, this monastic turn, is not ultimately completed apart from the world, but in connection to the world.

Here is where Niebuhr's insight into the nature of the church-world relationship deepens. He does not deny that the encounter of the church and world has an element of reciprocity. There is the instance where the church becomes anachronistic -- out of touch with a changing world. In this it may reflect, for instance "dogmatism", "individualism", and medieval authoritarianism, while its era has moved on to scientific, collectivist, modernist, and humanitarian modes of thinking.[42] But this adjustment remains peripheral to the substance of what is at stake in the church's relation to the world. It is the current form of sin in the world that provides the opportunity for renewed clarity, the contemporary shape of worldliness. The particular historically conditioned character of worldliness, provides the contextual setting for the church to rediscover and experience the power and relevance of its gospel. While the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are perennial, their subtle formation in a particular time and socio-cultural setting are unique. Furthermore, this worldliness, precisely because of its cultural entrenchment, tends to domesticate the church to it as a benign given of social existence. It is obvious then that in its relationship to the world, the church may either save or lose its life.[43] If it simply turns against the world for its worldliness by turning away from it, it will lose itself. If it seeks to save itself through "relevant" involvement and participation in the world [that is, "relevance" by the world's standards], it also will lose itself. Only when in its relatedness to the world, it finds the relevance of its gospel vis-a-vis the unique worldliness of its time, will it find itself/save itself. The church literally finds its life, the life of the gospel, in dialectical relation to the world. As such, the church and world are mutually "saved" in a dialectical relatedness. Furthermore, the important priority on differentiation which is so crucial to a valid dialectical relatedness, cannot take place only in the "wilderness", but is formed out of the encounter. Thus, "difference" is not created ex-nihilo, but is ultimately realized in interaction. Niebuhr is clear that it is the worldliness in culture and social institutions, not these in themselves, that is the problem in the world.[44] The point being that these have value and are, in a qualified sense, renewable for human and good ends. Equally, the true sanctity of the church is not in itself, but rather on the account of the uniqueness of its gospel; not in its "orthodoxy," but its interfacing the claims of the gospel and the light of the gospel with a contemporary crisis of worldliness.

Section E

Biblical Resources

The Implications of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians for Understanding Christianity's Relationship to the World

When one reads Paul's letter to the Galatians, it is not readily apparent that it contains a theology that radically changed the basis of the people of God's relationship to the world as it was understood by many of the Jews and Jewish Christians at that time. The law or Torah controlled the character of this relationship. Since the Babylonian captivity the law had grown in significance becoming the primary socio-religious mechanism which functioned to maintain Judaism's identity. It did this by empowering a social cleavage with non-Jews. Law or Torah marked social boundaries through its power to attach purity-impurity status to many of life's habits, passages and articles, thus interrupting free social intercourse with non-Jewish people. In this way, the holiness of the Jewish people was ensured in a setting of geographical and cultural pluralism.

The force of this institution was not met head on by the fledgling Christian development, but only as it came to cause tensions in their emerging communities. Christianity in this regard was not a Jewish reform movement. Early on the Apostolic leaders were forced to confront the issue of Gentile participation in the ever-widening messianic fellowship because of the tensions and questions that arose through these communities experiencing the force of the Jewish purity taboo. Almost immediately compromises were put in place in order to accommodate Gentiles. But even with compromise, tensions and confusion persisted.

It was this confusion that led Paul to mount a direct challenge on the law which gave separatism its force. Provoked by pastoral concerns, and the confusion among leaders in the church at large, he penned Galatians. The immediate aim of this letter was to safeguard the extra-nomistic basis of the Gentile Congregations Paul regarded as foundational to his special calling as missionary to the Gentiles. At issue in the crisis at Galatia was a universal or common versus a religio-ethnic basis of the new messianic people of God. But the consequence of relativizing Torah separatism was the displacement of the primary mechanism which protected the historic people of God from losing their identity under conditions of social, political and cultural encroachment. The effect of taboo was that of punctuating the differences between

Jews and Gentiles, giving to those differences dividing significance.

Preservation of the religio-social identity was accomplished in this way by achieving insularity from the foreign element. The direction of movement was "away from" or separatistic, not only from the "evil" in an encroaching world, but its strangeness or difference. When Paul relativized the dividing significance of Jew-Gentile difference and the power of the law to enforce a social cleavage at given junctures, he was simultaneously and unavoidably introducing the new basis and new dynamics which would govern the church's relationship with its world. Exploiting the universal scope of the gospel, Paul was able to point to a common foundation in which human differences, religious and ethnic, in fact all historic and created particularities, ceased to have dividing relevance.

The effect of this "strategy" or doctrine, negatively speaking, was that ecclesia could no more survive by resorting to separative dynamic. In its own way, ecclesia--the people of God in second Temple Judaism--had exploited the importance of its unique difference to survive; it had "lived off" of the capital of the socially separative force empowered by Torah--a separation which concretized or "sacramentalized" their specialness or uniqueness. By relativizing that, ecclesia was forced to be in the world in a new way. In the new model that comes into view in the Galatian Epistle, church is not a statement of specialness, i.e. parochial uniqueness but the new messianic commonness between humans, one not derived from historical revolution or creation but messianically.

Rather than taking up separatistic and parochial posture with regards to the world, the new ecclesia was to assume an offensive inclusive and universalist posture. Its gospel declared to the world a new ground of unity and its fellowship attempted to form and express that unity. Implied in Galatians is the view that the world is not a unified reality. It is a divided realm. Implied in Paul's Galatians discourse is the truth in which created and historically developed differences are elevated as significant, as ultimate or absolute, thus stratifying and dividing humanity. Ecclesia exists in the world "polemically" offensively pulling the disparate pieces of this world into a new unity. Theoretically speaking, Paul's principles put the new ecclesia on a unitive and offensive course instead of the parochial, separative course it was on.

That law or torah increasingly came to be relied on to protect the integrity of Judaism's discrete identity in the face of cultural-political encroachment has been

made clear by several key sociologists and theologians in recent years.[1] For the sake of brevity and directness it is necessary to commence this section with the Galatians' problem.[2]

James D. G. Dunn, while not interested in a consistent sociological - anthropological explanation of Judah's use of Torah, does emphasize that Judah exploited the ritualistic aspects of its law. Their use of law, he implies, has to do with their need to "restore, reinforce or redirect identity" (a phrase quoted from Hans Mol).[3] During times when Judah was threatened with assimilation into a greater cultural geopolitical entity, special attention and importance were given to circumcision, food laws and Sabbath observance. These in particular, and the Torah as a whole, were intensified as "boundaries". Boundaries are "characteristics which provide the group's self definition and mark it off from other groups".[4] Their function is to "separate". Quoting Raisanen, Dunn says "works of the law are something that separates."[5]

In the Maccabean era, as well as in 1 C. E., Dunn points out that Judeans were under special threat as a minority.[6] Their possibility of remaining a discrete historical body of people in these circumstances was commensurate with their ability to put in place a socio-cultural buffer zone between themselves and a strange and foreign encroaching world, thereby, tightening their own unity and identity.

Law itself, Dunn notes, increasingly came to signify Judaism's special identity. By virtue of the fact that Israel was given the law, the people knew who they were. "The law was part and parcel of Israel's identity both as nation and religion."[7] To relativize law was to tamper with that which provided for the identity of Judaism as the people of God. The law was critical for constituting the true people of God, both by virtue of its capacity to authorize taboo (thereby enforcing a degree of social separation from other peoples with whom they shared geographical space) and because it was to Israel alone that the law was given. The law signified and embodied their election or claim to unique religious significance.

That which enabled Judaism to survive the corrosive effects of being exposed to cross-cultural social and ideological currents without completely dissolving their identity was their unique capacity to enforce a religio-social insularity through recourse to Torah. "Israel cannot be harmed by its opponents so long as it is a people dwelling alone (Num. 23:9), "because in virtue of the distinction of their peculiar

customs they do not mix with other to depart from the way of their fathers."[8]

Wayne Meeks makes the following observation which focuses the rationale in this section's approach to Galatians:

> "The Pauline school rejected circumcision and purity rule, thus giving up one of the most effective ways by which the Jewish community maintained its identity over against the pagan society in which it lived. This was the practical issue at dispute between Paul and his opponents in Galatia, which our preoccupation with Paul's theological and Midrashic arguments has perhaps obscured. Would abolition of the symbolic boundaries between Jew and Gentile within the sect mean also lowering the boundaries between sect and world?"[9]

The following approaches Galatians in an attempt to open up the very insight that Meeks here has so perceptively stated.

What are the consequences of Paul's displacement of the socio-ecclesial role of the law for the church - world relation? In an effort to fairly arrive at this question two preliminary discussions are necessary. First, the immediate ecclesiological issue which provoked the letter of Galatians is described, namely, the claim that full inclusion into the messianic fellowship necessitates circumcision and keeping the law. Second, the pivotal theological challenge Paul mounted against the law in Galatians is examined with special emphasis on the sociological significance of Paul's "midrashic" arguments. After these two discussions the significance of Paul's argument for understanding the unique character of Christianity's relation to the world is explored.

The Galatians Problem

What there is to be known about the problem in the Galatian churches from the Epistle of Galatians may be summarized as follows. A faction had arisen in the churches which was attempting to compel the believers to be circumcised in addition to or as a completion of their faith [6:12, 3:3]. It appears this claim was likely being promoted by one primary person [5:10b], but had spread to numerous others [4:17, 1:17]. Because of this claim and the way it was being pressed on the believers it was causing division [4:17] as well as considerable animosity and dissension between them [5:15, 20]. Evidently what fueled the dissension more than anything else was that those who had been actually circumcised assumed an air of preeminence above

the rest of the believers. The fact that they bore the physical mark of the historical Jewish people, even though they had not also commenced to keep the Jewish law, set them apart from their brethren [6:12-13]. Clearly, they had become enamored with the significance of being historically identified with Judaism and Jerusalem [cf. 4:25, 2:14] [i.e. "flesh" 6:12-13].

The sheer novelty and superficiality of this claim obviously struck Paul. He knew circumcision was merely the door for keeping the entire Jewish law [5:3, 3:10] and an outward change of the flesh meant nothing [5:6, 6:15]. This was a case of misplaced value [6:3]. That which possessed true value was a "new creation" [6:15]; it had to do with the Spirit, (not the flesh) [6:12, 4:29, 5:16f]; it was proven by one's own work [6:2-3] and was characterized by a life of "faith working through love" [5:6].

Rather than merely a mild case of misguided zeal, Paul regarded the claim that a believer must be circumcised as a serious challenge to the gospel [1:6-9]. Circumcision essentially undercut the adequacy of the claim of Paul's Gospel that Gentiles of faith shared full and complete incorporation into the people of God [3:26-29]. Insofar as they had begun to look to circumcision, Paul asserts they had "fallen from grace" [5:4], become "bewitched," forgetting the central presentation of the crucified messiah [3:2] and hope that came with that [5:6], as well as the end it made of all grounds for human glorying [2:20, 6:12,14].

Paul makes it clear that the central issue of circumcision was the law; the law could not be taken in parts. With circumcision, the Galatians would be taking upon themselves the entire Jewish law requirement, placing themselves under full obligation to live like a Jew [5:3]. Paul names this as being "under" the law [4:21; cf 3:23, 4:5] and tantamount to a policy of "works" in tension with faith and the way of the Spirit [Gal. 3:2-10]. To make his point perfectly clear, he raised the question of how a person is justified, arguing that for both Jew and Gentile, it is solely a matter of faith [2:16,3:24].

This no-circumcision gospel and his Gentile mission, Paul insisted, came to him directly through a revelation of Jesus Christ [1:12,15,16] later to be affirmed by James, Cephas and John who also gave their blessing to his Gentile mission [2:1-10]. It is likely he was forced to make these facts clear because the Galatian troublemakers, in order to pave the way for their circumcision position, had called into question not

only Paul's gospel, but the independent character of the Gentile mission [1:6-17].[10]

The letter also provides a glimpse into the opposition and anxiety Paul had experienced on account of his position. He confesses he was fearful about whether his law-free mission to the Gentiles would be affirmed by the leaders at Jerusalem [2:2]. He recalled the pressure exerted on him in Jerusalem to have Titus circumcised and how they resisted these "false brethren's" efforts to bring them into bondage [2:3-5]. Perhaps most damaging to his position was his encounter with Cephas, whom he accuses of setting an example that in principle required Gentiles to "judaize" [2:14]. While the issue with Peter was not stated as one over circumcision, but table fellowship between believing Jews and Gentiles, the principal issue was similar in that believing Gentiles were not viewed as on even ground with their Jewish brethren of faith. In both the Jerusalem setting in which Titus' uncircumsized status was challenged and the Antioch setting where Gentile believers eating with Jewish believers was challenged, Paul insisted that the "truth of the gospel" was at stake. He saw himself as the one standing up for the right of believing Gentiles to remain Gentiles [2:5,14].

Whatever the Antioch issue consisted of, like circumcision, it must have pertained to larger questions having to do with the role of law in constituting the people of God in the messianic era. This is evident because his recounting of this incident to the Galatians forms the foundation of his argument against the law. In this argument, which forms the body of his letter, he places the gospel in the sharpest possible antithesis to the law.

When Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians over the issue of Gentile circumcision, he set forth a theology that challenged the law. Galatians theoretically displaced this institution on the authority of the gospel which, by virtue of its eschatological messianic prerogative, called all men and women into a new ecclesial unity. The main lines of Paul's argument are presented in Chapter Two beginning with verse eleven continuing through the end of Chapter Three. Five transitions in his argument are discernible in these 39 verses. The following attempts to summarize these in five discussions.

1.

The Collision of Two Ecclesiologies in Antioch and Galatia: The Sociological Setting of the Law-Gospel Polemic in Paul's Epistle

> "But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose." Galatians 2:11-21[11]

The Antioch event recorded in Chapter Two had far-reaching consequences. The fact that Paul's theological attack commences inside a retelling of his Antioch encounter with Peter, suggests the fundamental relatedness of the two issues, i.e. table fellowship and circumcision. The entire thrust in the letter was to return the Galatian believers to the gospel that he preached to them. He commended it alone as the basis of their fellowship. Only in this way would the Galatian church be secure; i.e. forming within themselves the Evangelical principle of their freedom.

The recounting of the incident in Antioch serves to press to the forefront the principal issue that was foundational to the Galatian problem. Peter is not simply presented as in the wrong and Paul in the right in this incident. This would set up the context for a serious questioning of Paul, since Peter's authority as an Apostle was beyond question. Peter rather is depicted as inconsistent. Only in the context of outside (Jerusalem/James visitors) does he separate from common table with the Galatian Gentiles. Outside of the presence of "brethren from James," Apostle Peter supports and participates in a community where Jew and Gentile fellowship without

regard to traditional Jewish taboo.

Paul's part in the story both serves to highlight his individuated history regarding his integrity to gospel *as the missionary to the Gentiles*, and it elevates the law-free basis of fellowship that is being challenged at Antioch and Galatia. The intensity of this letter may be due in part to the degree to which Paul is standing alone in this situation. There appears to exist significant confusion about the relationship between Jewish believers and Gentile believers at this juncture in the history of the messianic development.

Not only James [and the brethren who had come to Antioch from Jerusalem] were still asking for a level of ongoing significance to the law's power to structure a degree of separatism, but Peter and Barnabas were also confused. The Galatian believers were themselves being deeply affected by other "conservative" forces. If the fellowship of Jew and Gentile was to survive its fledgling beginning, a radical-principled basis for it must be set forth.

This letter is a radical frontal attack against making anything but the gospel the basis of the church. The gospel alone is made to be at stake. In this epistle, Paul brings the law into absolute polarity with the gospel. The situation has pushed Paul to the point where he launches an all out attack on the law. His letter, if read by a Jew, could only stir the deepest emotions. The law, he insists, is eschatologically dated. The messianic age and the age of the Torah are made discontinuous.

The fact that Paul's argument against circumcision begins inside the telling of the Antioch issue is significant.[12] In other words, the lesson Paul draws out of the Antioch issue is the foundation upon which he builds his anti-circumcision argument. The problem in Antioch is the relationship of Jewish believers and Gentile believers, a relationship having to do with the basis of fellowship. The question by Paul's account can be stated as one of whether to judaize or not to judaize. To judaize essentially implies that Gentiles must become Jews. Thereby, faith plus becoming ritually constituted a Jew forms the basis of complete unencumbered fellowship, including actually eating at the same table.

It is likely that a policy of measured Jewish believer Gentile (uncircumsized) believer fellowship existed even in the minds and practice of some of the more conservative spirits in the movement. Circumcision symbolizes a ritual purification which separates the male from the world and incorporates him into the holy people of

Yahweh. Paul's intention is to disclose a common basis of fellowship for Jewish believers and uncircumsized Gentile believers, to show the Galatians that Jews and Gentiles exist in an equal unified relationship in the messianic calling of the people of God.

Appealing to the gospel, transposed in conceptual terms of how a person is justified (or "righteoused" as E.P. Sanders translates) before God, he cast Jew and Gentile up against this transcendent juridical screen [Galatians 2:16]. His strategy is to bring clarity about earthly human relationships (fellowship) by focusing the basis of one's relationship to God. A person is "righteoused" before God through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul is working from the premise that no one who believes the gospel disputes this. Believing Jews and believing Gentiles share common ground because Jesus Christ has provided, by his death on the cross, their justification. To insert any distinguishing Jewish-Torah criteria into the basis of fellowship is "works", and to persist on insisting on measures of inequality within a fellowship because of distinguishing characteristics also reflects a work's justification conclusion.[13]

The relationship between believing Jew and believing Gentile, a relation having to do with the basis of fellowship, is transposed into a question of one's relationship with God. Circumcision by implication is held up as a work of the law, which when given dividing or inclusive social significance contradicts what is commonly held (i.e. the apostolic gospel) that all persons are justified by faith in Jesus Christ.[14] Paul's logic is that once the basis of one's relation to God is clarified everything else is addenda, it all comes into right perspective. How God justifies--this is the heart of Paul's argument.

If a person's right relation to God rests on faith in Jesus Christ alone (the common Apostolic claim), then to insist that the practice of circumcision influences one's right relation within the "people of God" amounts to a contradiction of the gospel. That would mean in Paul's logic that one was justified by works and Christ died in vain.[15] When one approaches the horizontal question (ecclesial fellowship) by way of the priority of the theological question how one is justified (via Christ's death on the cross), then the confusion disappears.

2.

Circumcision: Path of Blessing, Making One a True Son of Abraham or "Works of Law" and the Way of the "Flesh"

Paul Polemicizes the Old Ecclesiology

> Oh foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so many things in vain?-if it really is in vain. Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?
>
> Thus Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith. Galatians 3:1-9

In these verses, Paul emphasizes the importance of faith. Faith, as in being righteoused by faith, signifies the common ground of those gathered through the messianic calling. Contextually it stands in tension with parochial privilege correlated to Jewish identity and Torah. It may have been that the Galatian "heretics" understood something of the constitutive significance of circumcision and other holy observances of Judaism and thought that alliance with these placed one securely and fully inside the boundaries of the covenantal blessing of Judaism or they may have simply believed that nomos had an intrinsic power to mediate God's blessing? In either distinction the common ground of unity of the messianic calling was compromised.[16] Paul's polemical logic in these verses is to remind them how God's blessing came in the first instance through the preaching of the gospel of the crucified Jesus. With faith, in the wake of it, they received blessing, the spirit, miracles and experiences of God's presence among and for them. His intent is to place in relief their current pursuit of privilege and blessing with their original beginning and to remind them of the vividness with which the crucified Jesus was portrayed to them. He places them in this dichotomy and asks in effect, "which way will you have it?" The first way you started with--that of faith and spirit, or the second which is the way of works and reliance on the flesh.

Here "flesh" embodies the rhetorical polemic against reliance on the

continuing significance of physical Jewish identification. Even one's identity with Abraham is not after the flesh. When one understands how God's blessing was conferred on Abraham, then a physical identification with Abraham means nothing. God's blessing was conferred on Abraham after Abraham heard God's promise and believed and God blessed him (verse 9). On account of his faith, God reckoned him as righteous (verse 6). In this Abraham is portrayed as the prototypical father of all who following his example would also believe. The true children of Abraham are those of faith.

In turning to Abraham, the theological argument deepens. Tying the new common way of faith to Abraham is a device to argue faith's universalism. Obviously Abraham is not one figure among others. He is the primary historical figure of the way of God's blessing. Through Abraham, Paul elevated the faith ground of ecclesia to decisive significance. But the connection with Abraham is spiritual and eschatological. The messianic community is not "fleshly" or that is to say ethnically and religiously configurated, but a spiritual one.[17]

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3.

In Pursuit of a Blessing That Turns Out To Be A Curse: Paul Deepens His Polemic Against the Law

> For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them." Now it is evident that no man is justified before God by the law; for "He who through faith is righteous shall live"; but the law does not rest on faith, for "He who does them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us-for it is written, "Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree" - that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Galatians 3:10-14

In these verses, Paul begins to give serious attention to the role and problem of the law. For the Galatian troublemakers, circumcision and other Jewish observances were seen as necessary to complete the blessing begun by their conversion to Christ. These legal actions were likely viewed for their role in defining the person within the covenantal boundaries where God's full election and blessing was thought to reside. Paul turns potential blessing into curse, the very opposite of their expectation. The equation of law with curse, rather than blessing is no doubt experienced by them as a

contradiction to their ideas. By this letter their lives are framed as on the threshold of being cursed. Paul interprets their exclusive actions into that of a works blessing equation they are caught up in. Then he proceeds to argue that the law could never confer the coveted blessing of God, that came through Abraham and is available through Jesus Christ. Law and gospel here are placed in a parallelism both as to the present messianic age and the past. Appealing to Habbakak 2:4 and the Abrahamic story, he insists that God released a blessing on humanity quite apart from works of the law in an entirely different way. Blessing and curse have different origins-histories-destinations. As for the law its jurisdiction is that of curse, a curse claim Jesus had exhausted releasing blessing in its place.

What Paul is doing is scandalizing the judaizers who are advocating circumcision by polemicizing their actions as "works." In actual fact it is unlikely they understand their actions in such a light. They probably never regarded circumcision (and Sabbath day observance) as activities they were performing in order to acquire individual acceptance before a righteous God. By their very character these mark off or distinguish the holy people of God. Circumcision, something that is done to a male, is an act of incorporation or alignment into the historic ethnic people of God. For the Galatian troublemakers, this step completed what was begun by faith, effectively fusing the messianic development to the religio-ethnic particularities that constituted one a Jew. In both circumcision and Sabbath observance it is the significance these possess for who one is and is not. They mark one's identity within the boundary of a historically vested religio-ethnic community, ostensibly conferring rights and privileges. It is Paul who places on these observances the interpretation "works", because standing in the light of the dawning of the messianic age with its gospel such observances for a gentile can only be interpreted in this harsh light.[18] They are in tension with the direct universalization of God's full blessing through the messiah.

Furthermore, these verses may be read in the light of curse theology in currency at the time. Curse theology was codified around the time of the exile and came to explain the exile. Henceforth, Judah's fortunes were bound to this explanation for all time. To the extent foreign power intruded on their religio-political autonomy, to that extent they saw themselves under the power of this curse of God. Paul's break from sectarian Judaism involves the conviction that the

curse of the law could not be broken by careful practice of the law, i.e. taboo piety.

This represents a disjuncture with renewal movement theology. Paul "knows" (i.e. his christological conversion in contrast with his pharisaic outlook) how the blessing was not going to come. There is a built in pessimism about the law reflected in Paul's argument, which may be heard in light of his own conversion, a conversion which is not only to Christ but away from another resolution he was once invested in. [cf. "the life I now live"--Galatians 2:20]. He saw himself living in the beginning of the eschatological messianic blessing (i.e. spirit) and looked with confidence for its consummation at the parousia (Galatians 5:6).

In contrast, the pre-Christian Pharisee Paul pinned his hopes on the integrity of Judaism, or a remnant of Judaism, consisting of their resistance to disintegration through fidelity to the separateness and identity commanded by Torah.[19]

What is surprising in Paul's thought, and represents an abrupt cleavage with other views within Judaism, is the "extra nomistic" way the curse is overcome. Christ alone exhausts the curse on Israel after a life of fidelity to law and then, by virtue of his own messianic prerogative, releases blessing directly into the world apart from Torah. This messianic privilege in Paul's paradigm stands in partial but dramatic relief to contemporary patterns of thought. Most importantly it must be seen for its antithesis to the contemporary strategies which pinned the removal of the curse to an intensified Torah separatism. This may account for the explosive collision between a nascent Christian development still influenced by the pharisaic renewal theology and a Gentile law-free Christian development. [Cf. Acts 15:5.]

.4

Downsizing and Relativizing the Law:

Paul Completely Dismantles the Foundation of the Old Ecclesiology

> To give a human example, brethren: no one annuls even a man's will, or adds to it, once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many; but, referring to one, "And to your offspring," which is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance is by the law, it is no longer by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by the promise.
>
> Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise has been made; and it was

> ordained by angels through an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one; but God is one.
>
> Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not; for if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
>
> Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; Galatians 3:15-25

It is helpful for the larger purposes of this study to keep in mind what Paul is doing by what he is saying. This is especially so as his argument deepens and is extended. Circumcision of Gentile believers, the problem of the Galatian church(es), and the inability of Jewish believers and Gentile believers to participate together in table fellowship betray a deeper confusion and blindness as to the common ground of Jew-Gentile fellowship that has come into existence with the advent of the messianic age. Standing in the full light of the gospel, Paul first argues for the reality of common ground based on the theological precedent of how God justifies. In this, ecclesiology is determined by soteriology rather than law. Through the thick of Paul's theological argument until it climaxes in 3:26 to 4:7, he consistently maintains the soteriological priority of his argument. In other words, he maintains the discussion's focus around the question of how an individual is righteoused with God and corollary questions germane to that interest. It is within that setting he accomplishes the relativity of law and its transitory role. Only after satisfying himself with the completeness of his argument in this justification context does he proceed to his climax and address the original issue, asserting in sweeping emphatic terms a common ground of unity between Jew and Gentile.

The purpose in verses 15 to 25 is to prove that the function of the law is of a transitory penultimate nature, having nothing intrinsically to do with the realization of God's blessing. Historically, the function of keeping the law was tied to the law's capacity to mark the boundaries between the holy people of Yahweh and the world--who is inside the sphere of special covenantal blessing and who is outside. In verses 15-18, Paul's argument is to separate law from covenant. Here he demonstrates that God's blessing to the Gentiles was originally communicated through promise, a promise made long ago when God spoke directly to Abraham. As such

blessing is vouchsafed by promise and finds its fulfillment in and through messiah Jesus. Law came *after* the promise, Paul argues. Law is of a different genus than promise (i.e. it has a different vocation or purpose). Furthermore, law came mediatorially, indirectly. For all these reasons it is discredited as the ground from which God's blessing comes to reach human beings. The fact that law comes after promise argues for the preference of the older and begs the question of God changing God's course and word or oath.

Furthermore, law and promise are depicted as antithetical. Law in principle does not confer blessing and inheritance but because of its imperative character, it created debt and introduced a history of transgression and curse. Perhaps most damning is the mediatorial character of the Law. Law came through angels and was mediated via Moses, but "God is one," that is to say, God deals directly, does not parcel God's power off from or in distinction from God's self so as to set up an autonomous or partly autonomous sphere of authority.

From this point the argument moves to a question which is necessitated by the claims made. A contextual paraphrase of 3:19 "why the law" might read, "If the law and covenant are totally separate and the blessing comes through promise then why was the law given?" To this question Paul works out an answer that has several images. First he plainly says the reason the law was given was because of transgression (verse 19).

If one follows K. Stendahl's warning about reading Paul out of our "introspective conscience of the West", then it is possible to hear this explanation in a more corporate historical note. This phrase most likely refers to the transgression of Judah and is consistent with the redaction of the law by the "Deuteronomist." Law functions over against apostasy and transgression to prevent the disintegration of the people of God. Law gains its character by defining boundaries.

This is best understood by the word trespass. Here it is apparent that the nuances are subtle. If law has the power to define boundaries is it not, fundamentally speaking, that which frames Israel or constitutes Israel? Paul's answer is that the entire arrangement was penultimate, not to be confused as defining the context in and through which God's blessing was to be realized. It was a temporary set-up until the promise had run its course of time to its fulfillment. This explanation of the law's role in relation to transgression is bound up with Paul's eschatological argument. He

depicts law as a stopgap measure, an emergency adjunct until the breaking of the messianic time.

Paul's depiction of the law here is not the Lutheran second use of the law, which afflicts the conscience, preparing the individual for Christ's forgiveness. It is best described along the lines of the history of redemption view. Between the promise and its fulfillment in the Messiah the law is temporarily imposed to discipline Israel. In Galatians, Paul does not develop a teaching about the law magnifying sin or making clear sin. What Paul is concentrating on here in these verses is the temporary administrative role of the law to impose discipline and restraint on Israel. It never conferred life, blessing, the status of sons/daughters or inheritance. God keeps direct control of these.

Having separated Israel's tradition into law and covenant and giving the covenant the ultimate valuation, Paul is now confronted with the task of sculpting a new role for law. Because he is thoroughly Jewish he cannot dispense with it as a mistake or make it into a purely human institution. Neither can he give it a place in the present and future economy of the people of God. That would back him into separatistic trouble. From that standpoint one might hear Paul say, "Well, it's from God, but remember it is not directly from God (Moses and angels in between). It has a role to play but that is a temporary role. What is this role? Well, it's rather like a custodian, i.e. one who keeps a person in custody for a time, or it's rather like a pedagogues, whom a father puts over his children to discipline them until they grow up. It was brought in because of "transgression." One can see from these images that the law is not an end in itself, it merely functions as a keeper. The scripture (gramma), he says in one passing comment, assures that all are under sin and the law cannot change that. It does not impart righteousness or life. It may be said that Paul finds the new role for law in relation to sin, transgression and curse and subjects it to a history of redemption scheme in which the coming of the Messiah removes the curse and brings righteousness, thus ending the law's administration.

The Christological Basis of Paul's Ecclesiology

> ...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female;

> for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. Galatians 3:26-29

The institution of the law and the placing of the people of God under its jurisdiction is not denied by Paul. Rather he interprets this institution giving it a particular non-soteriological function for a limited time. During its jurisdiction the power of curse prevailed while the promised blessing awaited a future fulfillment. The privilege, thought by the Galatian "trouble makers" to be conferred by virtue of one's ritual attachment to that religious institution, was shown to be no privilege. As such the division that it structured had no theological justification; no enduring basis. It did not set a parochial or religious precedent for Jews. The division it of necessity structured served the need created by the absence of the messianic time.

God arranged the Jews "under" this institution, Torah, and "kept" them by it. As such it was a heteronomous mechanism that marked out their boundaries. But it did not exist to confer upon them the eschatological blessing of God. The least suggestion or implication that this institution mediates divine blessing overthrows Paul's universalism and legitimizes the Jew-Gentile separation, or necessitates Gentiles "judaize" the very thing he was contending against. For this reason, Paul negates the supposed soteriological power of the law. Law did not and cannot, by its nature, function to confer life, blessing, inheritance, sonship, Spirit [however, the soteriological benefit is identified]. The intent of his argument is to "relocate" that benefit definitively in one "non-parochial" place.

Jesus is the universalizer of the blessing of God. In and through Messiah Jesus the promised blessing of God is extended to all. This is the logic of Paul's universalism. It starts first with evangelical theological claims vis-à-vis individuals regarding how God justifies and then proceeds to make ecclesiological conclusions, namely, that there exists no basis to structure inequality or compromise unity in the eschatological people of God. Messiah Jesus is the agent for the unity and inclusivity of Jew and Gentile. Believers are one in him.

In fact, having laid the ground for the resolution of the immediate problem of Jew-Gentile separatism he applies it further to class and gender. This is the evidence his argument has reached its climax, the fact that he has achieved the messianic principle of unity and that he is able to apply that principle expansively to the original

problem and beyond it. In the new messianic configuration of the people of God, unity must not be compromised by ethno-religious claims nor any other claims (class, gender). "All" one in God through messiah Jesus - this is Paul's gospel. This is the foundation of the messianic community. To structure any inequality within it or to insist on any parochial claims within it is to "deny the truth of the gospel." Galatians 2:14.

Conclusion

The Implications of Paul's New Ecclesiology for Reunderstanding the Church-World Relation

There existed in the Galatian congregations a threat to the non-Torah Evangelical unity that Paul had grounded them in. In responding to this threat he plumbed the theological basis of the messianic calling's unity, the gospel transposed as justification by faith. It is this basis that discloses what sustains the church's differentiation from the world. What gives the church its internal unity simultaneously creates its disjuncture from the larger socio-cultural world. While Paul is not concerned with the latter, it is substantive to the former. The internal basis of the messianic calling's unity, the gospel or justification by faith unifies by doing two things. It negates all claims upon which humans structure division and inequality, while making a positive claim about a new basis of unity effected by the messiah; new by virtue of time, i.e. eschatological fulfillment, not theological principle.

The dividing significance attached to religio-ethnic particularities, by virtue of their supposed importance to signify and set apart, the people of God, while the precise setting of the problem is no different in principle to any historical or created particularity elevated to disequalizing or dividing significance in the messianic fellowship. The Messiah first (via the cross) destroys or negates all pretensions to ultimacy attached to these and puts humans on a common footing. The "righteousness" which the cross is brought into tension with in Galatians is clearly associative rather than existentially earned, correlative to the supposed status value of religion, class, wealth, ethnicity, gender, or any other basis. Faith is the opposite of works! Understood negatively, faith is to cease from giving distinguishing characteristics dividing or disequalizing socio-ecclesial significance. Understood positively, the messiah unites to the one God on a common basis. In this,

righteousness is not eliminated but the basis of one's righteousness "before God" (3:11) is through God's messiah (i.e. it is God who justifies [3:8]). As such one's status as a full child of God is secured *by God* on a basis outside of oneself, a basis commonly accessible to all. The "strategy" of this unity is one which calls a person into community through a basis that forms the new messianic universalism, relativizing particularities that normally structure division while simultaneously conferring a familial relationship with the one God (3:26, 4:6,7).[20]

That which marks the messianic calling off from the greater socio-cultural world is this peculiar unity (more precisely, community built on transcendent unity). The burden that is placed on the Galatian churches is to reflect this unity; to formulate themselves according to the "truth of the gospel." The world, insofar as it is implicated in this letter is not a unified reality. In it the dividing significance of religion, class, gender, wealth, ethnicity persist. Whereas the way the Hassidim[21] protected its discrete identity from an encroaching socio-cultural world by intensifying the socially separative force inherent in Torah purity, the messianic development characteristic of Paul exploited the salvific claim of the Apostolic gospel to forge a unity that transcended religio-ethnic differences as well as other socially elevated barriers. Its native impulse was toward building a new kind of social inclusivity. It manifested itself in a divided world by virtue of the fact that it denied the basic law of togetherness organized around the significance of a shared difference. As such the early church was especially attractive to those who had least "to lose" in religious social station (I Cor 1:18ff).

The source which the messianic calling drew on to formalize its unity can be seen either as a desacralizing source or another "parochializing" source. Parochial here indicates the attributing special power and prerogative to a particular group. Viewed from a sociology of religion analysis, it is difficult to escape the latter judgment. But viewed from within the logic and claims of the messianic community's gospel, the former judgment is unavoidable. The ecclesia existed in its world as a desacralizing phenomenon in tension with all religious claims, social conventions, and cultural standards which sanctioned the elevation of particular historical or created differences. The eschatological arrival of the messiah forced to the forefront a universal theological claim. The theological character of the gospel is that element which negates human claims which structure division. One unique indivisible and

invisible God, qualitatively distinct from human reality is the ultimate source and protection of the basis for human unity from its corruption (i.e. its religious or social transmutation into another basis which divides humans).

The severity with which Paul attacks law is of course not due to its moral character or an individual's interest in keeping it. Neither is Paul bent on dislodging Jewish believers from adhering to its ritual. Rather, it is the elevation of the status of the law so that it functions to mediate a God blessing. God, Paul argues, is one, that is to say, God does not deputize God's power [3:20]. If God did, it would empower a division between humans. The gospel as such, in tension with law, reclaims God's prerogative, so that "God's Godness is not corrupted." Gospel, and the messianic ecclesia as the counterpart of the gospel does not enter into the world as another division arrogating to itself new religious prerogative in competition with other claims. Rather, it announces the arrival of the time in which all religious, social, cultural claims once considered determinative are made relative.

Jesus as the Messiah negates the uncommon ground humans and groups have raised above their fellows and provides common ground. As such Jesus Christ is not viewed as a new basis to structure division and the ecclesia as a new religious force creating another human social division. Precisely because messianic unity is theological, Jesus is not a "parochializing," that is to say, a sectarian agent. The cross ensures that humans cannot attach to who they are, in and of themselves individually or collectively, degrees of ultimate or determinative significance. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross through which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (6:14). As such the cross ensures that God be God. Individuals and groups cannot simply attach themselves to the honor or prerogative of a special relation to this one God and thus enjoy a parochially shared claim.

The universal versus parochial significance of the messiah is further recognizable by the source of its claim. The cross is proclaimed as public news, a factual event which was seen to transpose itself out of the mere dimensions of the mundane so as to self-evidently possess soteriological and eschatological import (3:1; 5:6). It is this "factual" event that the church gathers around as evidence that a new day has arrived and is arriving. The implications suggest that rather than an ideology supporting a social revolution against the pressures of injustice and inequalities due to social stratification the church takes up an offensive posture toward its world. Over

against attacking and attempting to reform a given world armed and legitimized by a supporting ideology, the ecclesia proclaims the "factuality" of the eschatological dawn of a new unity and begins to embody it. Potentially this creates its own crisis and tension both individually and socially.

The messianic solution, in contrast with revolution, is ecclesial. By proclaiming and embodying the arrival of this new humanity (cf. churches first fruits) the ecclesia is able to say to its world, the old is on its way out, the new has come. Theoretically this gives to ecclesia the social high ground. Rather than putting forth another private or parochial claim, therefore further dividing the world, it proclaims the arrival of the messianic era and the new unity of humanity. Its distinguishing element in the world is both its peculiar character of witnessing to the arrival of the eschaton, and its peculiar unity--the penultimate embodiment of a universal unity.

In the messianic ecclesia, under Paul's persuasion [viewed in contrast to the Hassidim model of ecclesia], the "safety mechanism" that separated ecclesia from its world was eliminated. The church could no more survive through a retractive, divisive or separative posture, exploiting its exclusive eliteness or specialness over against the common lot of humanity. It could not sacralize itself. At least it could not follow this course and claim to be the church known to the Apostle Paul.

By negating the dividing significance of religio-ethnic difference and proclaiming a new basis of unity, the Gentile messianic ecclesia was formed in the world in a new way. It existed in its world offensively pulling persons from all the disparate social entities into the common (universal) messianic unity which had made its eschatological debut. In this way the ecclesia was "saved from being absorbed idealistically and ideologically into its world (i.e. saved commensurate with its eschatological and messianic awareness). Furthermore, it was saved from a problematic retreat from its world into a holy enclave. It not only lacked a religious mechanism for retreat its gospel represents an offensive engagement with the world. It was also saved from an ecclesial triumphalism or arrogance. All it could do and must do is obey the gospel. The gospel proclaimed the fact and source of humanity's unity. The church was not the solution in itself. Its common form witnesses to an expectation.

In this way, the church's relation to its given world is potent. It draws its identity and script, not from its capacity to be relevant to a given world, but from its

confidence about the arrival and soon to be consummated new age characterized by a new world order. This allows it to escape from the problem of taking the world too seriously and requires the world to take it seriously. It exists in its world with a non-anxious presence. On the news-eschatological element rides the church's capacity to overcome the temptation to be, on the one hand, reactive-pessimistic about its world, leading to separation from the world or control over it, or on the other hand, to become naively idealistic about the socio-cultural development of the world, thereby becoming absorbed into it. As such the gospel allows the ecclesia to exist in such a way as to empower a creative tension with its world.

Section A Endnotes

1. Alan S. Gurman and David P. Kniskern, ed. *Handbook of Family Therapy*, Chapter 5, Edwin H. Friedman, DD, "Bowen, Theory and Therapy" (New York: Brunner and Magel, 1991), p.144

2. Ibid., p. 139.

3. Ibid., p. 141.

4. Ibid., p. 140.

5. Ibid., p. 141.

6. Ibid.

7. See Edwin H. Friedman, "Feedback and Change, Pain and Responsibility," *Generation to Generation* (New York: Guilford Press, 1986), pp. 46-48.

8. *Handbook of Family Theraby,* p. 135, cf. p. 166.

9. Ibid., p. 136.

10. Ibid., p. 137.

11.Ibid., p. 141.

Section B Endnotes

1.Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, ed. and trans., James Luther Adams (London: Nisbet & Co., LTD, 1948, repr., abridged edition, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 207

2. See for instance Harold P. Nebelsick, *Theology and Science in Mutual Modification*, (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1981).

3.Karl Barth, "Panorama of a Century," Address given at the meeting of the *Goethegesellschaft* in Hannover, January 8, 1957 quoted in *The Humanity of God*, trans. John Newton Thomas and Thomas Wieser, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1960) p. 20.

4. Ibid., 18

5. Ibid., 18

6. Ibid., 19

7. Ibid., 20, 19

8. Ibid., 19-20

9. Ibid., 19

10. Ibid., 20

11. Ibid. 20

12. Ibid., 20

13. Ibid., 19

14. Ibid., 19

15. Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth, His Life From Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, Translated by John Bowden, (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, Pa., 1975), p. 111.

16. Karl Barth, "Panorama of a Century," 23

17. Karl Barth, *From Rousseau to Ritschl* from *19th Century Protestant Theology*, being the translation of eleven chapters of "Die Protestantische Theologie Im 19. Jahrhundert", trans. Brian Cozens, in The Library of Philosophy and Theology, ed. John McIntyre and Alasdair MacIntyre, (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1959), 14.

18. Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World*, (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1931), 115.

19. Ibid, 114.

20. Robert W. Jenson, "Karl Barth" in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed., David F. Ford (London and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989). 29.

21. Karl Barth, "Evangelical Theology in the Nineteenth Century" in *The Humanity of God*, trans. John Newton Thomas and Thomas Wieser (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1960), 16.

22. Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and Consummation Dogmatics*, vol. III, trans. David Cairns and T.H.L. Parker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 212.

23. Harold P. Nebelsick, *Theology and Science in Mutual Modification,* 83

24. Ibid. 83.

25. Between about 1918 to 1933, Barth's early dialectic was formed and promoted. The primary documents this early construction may be found in are his articles in *Zwischen den Zeiten*; his book, *Resurrection of the Dead*, translated by H.J. Stenny (London, 1933); in the three essays of 1920 contained in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, and in the Barth-Thurneysen Correspondence 1914-1925 found in *Revolutionary Theology in the Making*, (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964). See also Thomas F. Torrance, Karl Barth: An Introduction to *His Early Theology*, 1910-1931, (London: SCM Press, 1962) and James M. Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, vol. 1, Part I, trans. Keith R. Robinson, Part II, trans. Louis De Grazia and Keith R. Crim (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1968). Bruce McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectectical Theology Its Genesis and Development*, (Clarendon Press:Oxford 1995).

26. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectial Theology,: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 11-13, 21, 22.

27. See Barth and Gogarten's response to Tillich's idea of paradox in the section "The Debate on the Concept of Paradox" in James M. Robinson, *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology,* 133-162. (Cf. p. 148-150.)

28. Barth, *Humanity of God*, 41.

29. Eberhard Jungel, Karl Barth: A *Theological Legacy*, trans. Garrett E. Paul (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 28.

30. Karl Barth, "Epistle to the Romans, Forward to the Second Edit ion," in Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology,* p. 94.

31. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. from 6th ed. by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933; Oxford University Press paperback, 1968), 10.

32. See Barth, "The Strange New World Within the Bible," . in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, trans. Douglas Horton (USA: The Pilgrim Press, 1928), 28-50.

33. This observation of Brunner was made in the context of the very early first edition of Romans, while Barth was still immersed in the religious idealism of liberalism. See Emil Brunner, "*The Epistle to the Romans* by Karl Barth: An Up-to-Date, Unmodern Paraphrase," in Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, 65-66.

34. Karl Barth, "Foreword to the Second Edition," in Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, 95.

35. "If I have a 'system,' then it consists in my keeping in mind as constantly as possible what Kierkegaard called the 'infinite qualitative difference' between time and eternity, in its negative and its positive meaning. 'God is in heaven, and thou on earth.' The relationship of *this* God to *this* man, the relationship of *this* man to *this* God, is for me the theme of the Bible... When I now approach a text like the Letter to the Romans, I do it with the provisional assumption that when Paul formed his concepts he had the both plain and immeasurable meaning of that relationship at least as clearly in mind as I have when I now busy myself with the attentive rethinking of his concepts." Ibid., 94.

36. Ibid., 94-96.

37. Karl Barth, "Foreword to the Second Edition," in Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, 91.

38. Ibid.

39. Karl Barth, "Epistle to the Romans", in Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, 93.

40. McCormack, p. 222.

41. At no point can God be simply and definitely introduced into the realm of the actual, even within the realm of this Evangelical resolution. It is this that is behind Barth's inflation of the doctrine of the word of God in revelation as a radicalization of the Reformers' recovery of the preaching of the word and the response of faith.

42. The setting of this lecture is sketched in Eberhard Busch's biography of Barth with fragments of the presentation quoted. Later it was published in full as Chapter VIII in *The Word of God and the Word of Man.*

43. Barth, *Word of God*, 282.

44. Ibid., 280, 281.

45. Ibid., 281. See also Karl Barth, "Past and Future: Friedrich Naumann and Christoph Blumhardt," in Robinson, ed., *Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, 35-45.

46. Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, 283.

47. Ibid., 205.

48. Bruce McCormack has shown that Barth's dialectical formulation passed through four stages of development en route to its maturity. He is not the first to argue that Barth fundamentally never abandoned the dialectical framework of his thought. It is more proper to say he perfected it over time. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology,* 11-13 and 21, 22.

49. R. H. Roberts, "Barth's Doctrine of Time: Its Nature and Implications, " in *Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method*, ed. S.W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 96.

50. Bruce McCormack's important study has shown Barth's dialectical framework of thought, went through four stages of development ,from 1915 forward. For a summary see Bruce McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909-1936*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

51. Alasdair I. C. Heron, *Century of Protestant Theology*, (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press,1980), 83.

52. At issue in Barth and Bultmann's parting of the ways is this "clarification" on faith. The early dialectic the way it was stated allowed for that commerce as Barth recalled. "For Bultmann, 'faith' and 'faith' again was at the centre of his interest in my book and his approval of it. He thought that what I had said about 'faith' would easily fit into a sequence with what Schleiermacher, Otto and Troeltsch had discussed under the title of 'religion'." Quoted in Busch, Karl Barth, 136. The "mature" Barth, as Heron points out, radicalized Calvin's *analogia fidei* (over against *analogia entis*), so that "the whole character of faith is that it does not rest on itself, nor on what can be seen as an extension of itself, but what is quite other than itself, by which its own emptiness is filled." Ibid., 87. See Karl Barth, "Faith and its Object," in *Church Dogmatics* IV: *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, part one, ed., G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956).

53. Robert W. Jenson, "Karl Barth," in *Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian, Theology in the Twentieth Century, vol. 1*, ed., David F. Ford (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1989), 33.

54. Only little by little did Barth come to recognize that Protestantism was captive to the bourgeoisie, individualistic and anthropocentric culture and that his own theology derived mainly from Herrmann (a student of Schleiermacher) was a complicating factor.

The first elementary step in reclaiming Protestantism's critical distance did not arise from resources within Protestantism itself. Only after bourgeois culture itself reached a crisis (due to the fact that its own principles had reached maturity and produced alarming socioeconomic conditions) did Protestantism's own participation in that ethos begin to come under scrutiny. Protestantism's initial critique of liberal culture organized around individual autonomy was first indebted to secular socialist theorists, adding only the additional element that with structural change individual spiritual change was also necessary. Bruce L. McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 78ff especially 83, 84.

When Barth and Eduard Thurneysen were confronted with the problems of their parishioners in the towns of Safenwil and Leutwil in the Aargau region of northern Switzerland they began to question both bourgeoisie culture and Protestantism's absence of a socialistic ethic. It was their exposure to the plight of many wage-earning factory workers in their parishes that forced them to entertain a socialistic critique. "Barth even thought that his later theology had its roots in his ministry at that time. 'It grew out of my own situation where I had to instruct, preach and do a little pastoral work.'" Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life From Letters and Autobiographical Texts*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 61. Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt's work has at the very least brought to clarity the extent to which Barth's theology grew out of the social problems he encountered in his Safenwil pastorate. See *"Socialism in the Theology of Karl Barth", Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, trans and ed. George Hunsinger (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) 47-76.

55. The church, he came to realize, was in perennial danger of losing itself and selling out it's Christ. At the Tambach lectures in 1919 he complained "of secularizing Christ for the umpteenth time, e.g. today for the sake of democracy, or pacifism, or the youth movement, or something of the sort--as yesterday it would have been for the sake of liberal culture or our countries." Busch, *Karl Barth*, 111.

56.Barth himself described the situation into which Protestantism had fallen, as one in which God had been reduced "to a pious notion, a mystical expression and symbol of a current alternating between man and man's own heights or depths." Karl Barth, *Humanity of God* (London: Collins, 1961) p. 40.

57. Karl Barth, *Community, State and Church,* trans. By A.M. Hall, G. Ronald Howe, Ronald Gregor Smith (Gloucester Mass: Peter Smith, 1968) p. 156

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., p. 161

60. _____, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4, , ed., G.W. Bomiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-1969), 687,688.

61. See for instance, Ibid, Part I, 661, 662.

Section C Endnotes

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. Neville Horton Smith, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan Publishing), 1955), p. 189

2. Ibid., pp. 189, 190

3. Ibid. pp. 188 and 189

4. Ibid. p. 189

5. Ibid., p. 189

6.Ibid., p. 189

7. Ibid., pp. 189 and 190

8.Ibid., p. 190

9. Ibid., p. 193

10. Ibid., p. 194

11. Ibid., p. 194

12. Ibid., p. 195

13. Ibid., p. 195

14. Ibid., p. 198

15. Ibid., p. 199

16. Ibid., p. 200

17. Ibid., p. 204

18. Ibid., p. 200

19. Ibid., p. 200

20. Ibid., p. 201

21. Ibid., p. 201

22. Ibid., p. 201

23. Ibid., p. 202

24. Ibid. p. 206

25. Ibid., p. 206

26. Ibid., p. 204

27. Ibid., p. 204

28. Ibid., pp. 205, 206

29. Ibid., p. 200

30. Ibid. p 354

31. Ibid., p. 354

32. Ibid., p. 354

33. Ibid., p. 355

34. Ibid., p. 356

35. Ibid., p. 356

36. Ibid., p. 355

37. Ibid., p. 355

38. Ibid., p. 356

39. Ibid., p. 355

40. Ibid., p. 355

41. Ibid., p. 355

42. Ibid., p. 356

43. Ibid., p. 357

44. Ibid., p. 356

45. Ibid., p. 356

46. Ibid., p. 356

47. Ibid., p. 356

48. Ibid., p. 357

49. Ibid., p. 357. See also p. 358

50. Ibid., cf. p. 357

51.Ibid., p. 357

52.Ibid., p. 357

53.Ibid. p. 357

54.Ibid., p. 358

55.Ibid., cf. p. 359 and p. 360

56.Ibid.

57. Ibid., p. 360

58. Ibid., p. 360

59. Ibid., p. 361

60. Ibid. p. 360

61. Ibid. p. 361

62. Ibid., p. 361

63.Ibid., p. 362

64.Ibid., p. 523

65. Ibid

66. Ibid., cf. p. 523 with p. 470 (second visit to America)

67. Ibid., p. 524

68. Ibid., p. 524

69. Ibid., p. 524

Section D Endnotes

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God In America* (Middleton, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988; First Publication by Harper & Row, 1937), see pp. 41-43, 72, 73.

2. See Chapter V, p. 165 ff.

3. P. 88.

4. See *Kingdom of God In America*, p. 27. In actual usage, Niebuhr's three terms tend to blend in with each other and are not used consistently.

5. See Paul Ramsey, ed., *Faith and Ethics*, Chapter 10, "The Kingdom of God in America and the Task of the Church" by Robert Michaelson, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957), p. 287.

6. p. 3.

7. See pp. 60-63.

8. See pp. 39 ff, 65, 80.

9. See pp. 77-79; also p. 98.

10. See pp. 99, 100 and 126.

11. See *The Kingdom of God in American*, Chapter IV.

12. Ibid.

13. See p. 130.

14. See p. 151.

15. See *The kingdom of God in America*, Chapters IV and V.

16. Ibid., p. 191.

17. Ibid., p. 193.

18. P. 179.

19. See Chapter Four, Section A, this thesis.

20. *The Kingdom of God in America*, pp. 173. 174.

21. See Chapter 3, Section B, this thesis.

22. *The Kingdom of God in America*, p. 181.

23. Ibid, p. 181.

24. Ibid. p. 31.

25. Ibid. p. 32.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. p. 181.

29. Ibid., p.195.

30. Ibid., p. 196.

31. Ibid., compare p. 67 with p. 9.

32. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

33. *Church Against the World,* p. 592

34. Ibid., 592

35. Ibid., 592

36. Ibid., 592, 593, 604.

37. Ibid., 597

38. Ibid., 599

39. Ibid., 599

40. Ibid., 599

41. Ibid., 599

42. Ibid., 596

43. Ibid., 596

44. Ibid., 599, 600

Section E Endnotes

1. See for instance Mary Douglas. *Purity and Danger*; Hans Moi, *Identity and the Sacred.* James D G Dunn *Jesus Paul and the Law*; L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed and Sex.*

2. To satisfy myself, I surveyed the history of Judaism's use and reliance on the law from the exile to first century Jewish and Christian developments. I have bound this as a separate document and lodged it with St. Mary's library for the readers benefit. My conclusions generally parallel James D. G. Dunn's position. See James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians,* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990) chap. 8, "Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law", 216--"The Social Function of the Law".

3. Ibid. 216

4. Ibid., 216

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 217

7. Ibid., 218

8. Ibid., 217, 218

9. Wayne Meeks, "Toward a Sociological Description of Pauline Christianity" in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, vol. II,, ed., William Scott Green (publisher/date missing: University of St. Andrews library no. BM 173.68), 33

10. On the traditional view that Paul's apostleship was called into question by the Galatian heretics and that his response in Galatians, Chapters 1 and 2 record his defense against that D. J. Verseput argues otherwise. He urges a more consistent sociological lens be used when reading these verses. "Paul apparently found it frequently necessary to defend himself against conservative forces which sought to restrain the Gentile mission within the bounds of the Torah covenant... he begins the rebuttal of his opponents' teaching with an autobiographical review which receives its persuasive force from his role as founder of the Galatian church. Paul assures his readers that his ministry among Gentiles was independent of any essential contact or subordination to the Jewish community. That is, the Gentile mission was not an appendage of God's work among the covenant people of Israel with the result that the Gentiles must first Judaize to participate in salvation... thus briefly stated, Paul is not defending himself against personal attacks in Galatians 1 & 2, but is advancing an historical argument for the independence of the Gentile churches from the confines of the Torah. D.J. Verseput, "Paul's Gentile Mission and the Jewish Christian Community: A Study in the Narrative in Galatians 1 & 2," *New Testament Studies* 39, no. 1 (Jan. 1993), 57-58.

11. *Revised Standard Version.*

12. Some scholars point out that Paul's autobiographical rehearsal of his speech to Peter proceeds from 2:14 through verse 21. See Markus Barth, "Jews and Gentiles: The Social Character of Justification in Paul," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 5 (1968), 246. Whether or not Paul actually intends for the Galatians to read much past verse 15 or 16 as an

autobiographical historical statement remains a question in my mind. It may be an impassioned statement to the Galatians of his position and experience made over against the Antioch issue and in light of the new Galatian issue.

13.Paul's use of the term "works" or "works of the law" for justification is likely a rhetorical device to scandalize those who are insisting on the ongoing significance of certain purity regulations for Gentile believers; purity regulations that historically functioned to maintain the people of Jahweh's separateness and to initiate one into the separated/holy people of God. As E.P. Sanders and James D.G. Dunn have stressed, Judaism's use of law (for purity or ethical purposes) is not by principle legalistic. But from Paul's perspective, charging believers in the messiah with "works," who persist in attaching ecclesiological significance to these is not without "Evangelical" integrity in light of the dawn of the eschaton. The "legalism" as such that is named here may more properly be identified as "associative" rather than "ethical." As is well known, E. P. Sanders' positions, i.e. that first century Judaism was not legalistic and that Paul's critique of works proceeds from his Gospel assumptions, not from a legalistic matrix within Judaism or nascent Christianity may be found in his two books: *Paul and Palestinian Judaism and Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. James D.G. Dunn's similar position was first published in *Jesus, Paul and the Law*.

14. Commenting on the Antioch incident's significance in Paul's eyes, F.F. Bruce points to the intersection of the religions and the social: "In Christ, Paul believed and affirmed, there was 'neither Jew nor Greek' (Galatians 3:28), whatever distinctions might persist in the world at large. The middle wall of partition between them had been demolished by the wok of Christ; Paul would not stand idly by and see it rebuilt, whether as a religious or as a social barrier. The only logical reason for preserving it as a social barrier would be its continuing validity as a religious barrier, and to recognize such a continuing validity, even if it were only in outward behavior, would be to nullify the grace of God. If God's redeeming grace was to be received by faith, and not by conformity with the law of Moses, then it was available on equal terms to Jew and Gentile, and to make a distinction in practice between Jewish and Gentile believers, as Peter and the others were doing, was in practice to deny the gospel." F.F. Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977), 178.

15. When the contextual problem of requiring Gentiles to Judaize is given the key hermeneutic then the last seven verses in Chapter 2 [15-21] may be understood as a tight unit which state emphatically (A) that believing Jews know that while they are Jews by nature, they are not justified because of their Jewish-Torah constituency [15-16], (B) that if they, the Jews, (or any believer) takes this non-Torah road to justification, then turns around and proceeds to give the law the power to define them or others as "sinners' then that would be as much as involving Christ into a scheme which leads people into sin. It would be to return to the law basis of viewing one's inclusion with God/people of God [17-18]. Paul himself disinvested in the law's prerogative to constitute him a Jew and therefore insure his right with God and standing within God's people [18-21].

16. This common Gospel platform of fellowship may be the historical edge of the term ecclesia which evidently came to the fore as a/the description of the church in the wake of the Hellenist missionary endeavors. Hengel reasons, "its detachment from Judaism then led this early Hellenistic community, following the LXX, to give itself the name *ecclesia* and in this way to proclaim its eschatologically conditioned difference from the Jewish synagogue communities. In the same way--in contrast say to the mission carried on by the school of

Hillel the proclamation of the Euaggelion took the proclamation of the Law." Martin Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, trans. John Bowden (London:SCM Press, Ltd., 1983), 58.

17. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 245, 250.

18. Dunn attributes this phrase, "works of the Law" to research by E. Lohmeyer, which concluded it meant "service of the law". "It marked (in the Qumran sect, i.e. 'deeds of the Law') the community of the end days in its distinctiveness from outsiders..." Ibid., 220. Dunn's explanation, I believe, reflects the penchant of a NT scholar to account for all expressions through historical parallels. Paul's passionate rhetoric seems to me more plausible. "Works" like being "under" scandalizes those who are participants. It interprets their actions negatively.

19. Within historical Judaism it is no surprise that law and curse are intertwined. Paul's argument is not novel at that point. Even the conclusion that there was no inside resolution to the curse cycle was not entirely a departure from patterns consistent with Jewish thought, insofar as messianic expectations existed within renewal theology. Moreover, even the messiah's supreme fidelity to the law, depicted twice in this letter, fits fairly well within some streams of Jewish thought at the time. See N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 137-156.

20. 49. Addressing the nature of the church under discussion here as it came to be conceived and formed under Paul's leadership, Paul D. Hanson states, "In his Letter to the Galatians, Paul sought to establish that the crucifixion of the Messiah was the eschatological event that erased all distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, for it inaugurated the age of freedom under God's grace transcending every human effort to erect restrictive barriers. Specifically in 3:23-29 Paul addresses the question of membership and eligibility, and states emphatically that all distinctions had been erased, for salvations comes through faith...

"... In the eschatological concept of the 'new creation'--that is, the order of reality with which God brings to fulfillment the divine plan for creation by breaking down all human distinctions that had led to the exclusion of certain groups and individuals--we find the heart of Paul's notion of community...

"... Unfortunately, the challenge to be a community guided by the Spirit and fundamentally egalitarian in structure has rarely been heeded, leading to recurrent attempts to establish certain groups, whether defined by gender, race, or social status, as privileged and in possession of superior authority in the community of faith." Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (San Francisco:Harper & Row, 1986), 439, 442, 443.

21. S James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*

CONCLUSION

This study has argued that:

(1) Segments of mainstream Protestantism in the United States have and continue to be uncritically identified with its world;

(2) This identity is primarily betrayed by two patterns, "fixity" and "freedom," defined as attempts to transpose Christianity into a religious form and connect it directly to society. As discussed, "fixity" represents a regulative strategy to form this connection and "freedom"represents an integrative one. The former presents "Christianity" to society in a heteronomous religious form in partial tension to modern freedom under the pretext of saving liberal society by marking its proper religio-moral bounds. The latter presents "Christianity" to society in a religious form compatible to and supportive of autonomy and freedom;

(3) The gospel requires an ecclesial response which exists in a differentiated dialectical relation to the world.

The Conclusion first reviews the historical problem of American Protestantism's uncritical identification with its world. Drawing from the net results of Chapters One through Six, eight factors are summarized which contributed to the problem. In the second and final section of the Conclusion, a constructive response to the problem is presented. Returning to the net results discussed in Chapter Seven, eight overlapping points are made. Each point embodies some aspect of the challenge with which American Protestants are confronted if they are to break the patterns of uncritical identification and forge a creative differentiated connection to their world.

Uncritical Identification: Summarizing the Problem

The close identity between Protestantism and American society which expressed itself in the patterns described as "fixity" and "freedom" may be summarized as forming out of the following forces. While attempting to make the church a select society, New England Puritanism in the colonial period extended the range of its religion outside this ecclesial sphere for two purposes. First, it marked the religio-moral boundaries of society at large. Second, it made building a model society ("city") an explicit mission of the church's calling. In both of these employments of

religion, one can trace the beginning of a distinction between an ecclesial and a public Protestantism. Even so, in that colonial period, the established church was the primary institution around which society was organized and the goal of public religion was to direct individuals to God and build the Commonwealth to the glory God. Nevertheless, a precedent was set in this two fold "extra-ecclesial" employment of Christianity. It is certainly not the engagement of Christianity with society that is to be faulted. But because one of the main goals of the Puritans was to build a better society and because this goal was explicit, it posed a risk that it would take on a life of its own and that Christianity would come to see its social role as one of employing its religious resources to assist in the realization of this better society. The same may be said for the Puritans' idea of establishing their society on a biblical constitution. While their explicit aim was to orient every person in the district to the sovereign will of God, this practice was a short step from abstracting the moral resources and boundaries of Christianity from their true redemptive framework and using them to achieve public stability and cohesion.

During the formative period surrounding the time of the Revolution, when disestablishment was completed, the place of church over society was ended. However, while society was emancipated from the church so that it could supposedly find its own ends and goals, it was not quickly emancipated from an extension of Protestantism beyond its ecclesial sphere - "religious" or "public" Protestantism. While church was uniformly reduced in its social stature to that of a voluntary association, a plural form of Protestantism discovered its unity under the rubric evangelical. In this form, it maintained both cultural and formal influence over its world, marking out the acceptable social boundaries in conformity to its religious and moral values. The new republican unity of the former colonies and the new evangelical unity of Protestants, sustained a unique kind of relationship which eventually came to be largely characterized by complementarity.

In the new republic, society and Protestantism were both changing dramatically. The Enlightenment ideas behind 1776 suggested to the American imagination that their republican experiment possessed social and historical significance. In this the original Puritan dream for society came to be invested in the new nation. Society increasingly came to be viewed as an end in itself embodying "new" human ideals and values. Under the forces of the Second Great Awakening and

the challenge presented by the new political era of liberal values, an Evangelical imagination was born which called for a new kind of Protestantism - one *essentially* unified and reformed in its saving principle, thereby suited to be the complement of liberal society. As shown, this new Protestantism had wider horizons. It believed all could be saved and it was more confident. It had experienced the power of revival on the masses. It had even begun to believe the millennial kingdom was near because in their experience, that synergism between republican freedom and evangelical revivalism had begun to change the course of history. As shown in Chapters Three and Four, the secular imagination about America and the millennial imagination increasingly became identified.

The two sides of this uncritical identification were evident early on in the life of the republic. The rise and eventual predominance of Evangelicalism was an ambiguous good. While moderating sectarianism and proving the intrinsic vitality and potency of free religion to be a powerful force in society relying on influence alone (without recourse to coercion or civil support), Evangelical pietism and revivalism rendered Protestantism more vulnerable to cultural and national captivity. As shown, these forces left Protestantism more permeable and malleable to laissez faire individualism and the more humanistic optimism that was bred into America through the Enlightenment, as it faced the task of transforming a native America into a modern nation. Protestantism became enamoured with the human possibility to change, and the uniqueness and sanctity of the individual experience of God. This focus enabled it to view itself less as a discrete ecclesial society with a given doctrinal structure and more as America's religious counterpart. The elevation of the subjective side of the gospel, which includes the faith-experience, sanctification and personal change, became the bridge which facilitated an increasingly consistent commerce with modernity's values. Protestantism complemented modernity's goals and ideology about human-social change and development.

Evangelical religion was considered to be the spiritual complement to the political reorganization of society on liberal-republican values. Mainstream Protestantism shifted from an emphasis on external to internal authority complementing the political shift from subjects to citizens who were enfranchised with liberty and charged with its responsible exercise. Nineteenth century evangelicalism became republican religion. It seemed tailor-made for the emerging

modern state.[1]

At the same time, the "objective" side of Protestant faith, the biblical reference of truth, progressively came to be regarded as true by Enlightenment rationalistic measurements of truth, and therefore, normative for society at large. Protestants like Isaac Backus commenced their thinking on the premise that social morals and boundaries must be derived as assuredly by recourse to a Revelation-Biblical basis as by a rational natural basis, assuming as most in that period did, that no contradiction between them existed. Even though society was not to be under the institution "church," it was not free from the religious moorings made clear through scripture. While antebellum Protestantism, in terms of its religious institutions proper, came under the critique and limits insisted on by the Enlightenment and Baptist schools, the socio-cultural reach of their religio-moral values did not. These were to remain normative for America. After all, the republic was conceived by most mainstream Protestants as a 'Christian' republic.

The two aspects of evangelical Protestantism just reviewed (the subjective-experiential and the "objective" scriptural-normative) describe the theoretical basis for an optimistic and pessimistic enmeshment in the socio-cultural world of modernity. This is especially true as the promise and debt of a society organized around individual liberty came due.[2] As America's Enlightenment charter of liberty and rights became more consistently structured and the individualistic ethos became more dominant, the social-cultural configuration of America began to change. In time, society reflected the risks and the promise of the new ordering. The promise began to be realized with the extension of rights and liberties to a wider spectrum of individuals and peoples beyond white-landed males with a corresponding social mobility and advancement. The risk began to reveal itself when diminished cultural cohesion resulted from a marked increase in the pluralization and individualization of society. This, as discussed, is reflected in the breakdown in religio-moral consensus, extreme economic disparity and shrinking sociality. Increasingly, society became "parochialized." The ethos of modernity bore fruit in the proliferation of discrete groups with little or no underlying shared meanings. Society increasingly came to be characterized as a collective of autonomous individuals not bound by institutional interests and mores.

"Public" or "religious" Protestantism's relation to the modern world, gradually

emerged in two overlapping forms. It has been naively optimistic. Protestantism also became anxious and pessimistic with regard to changes that were occurring in their fledgling modern world, especially changes in the spheres of religio-moral values, the configuration of family roles, and gender roles in society and changes which might threaten the autonomy of economic freedom and existing concentrations of wealth and privilege. These two directions which are called "Fixity" and "Freedom," correspond to the Church's captivity to cultural counterparts represented by those in society who are pessimistic and anxious about the course of modernity and those genuinely optimistic and idealistic about the possibilities of society organized on liberal values. Only toward the end of the nineteenth century did these bifurcate.

While both of these have possessed a measured critical element toward society, eventually their interests differed. The one form interfaced its religious resources with modernity's social project in support of the dominant Jeffersonian idealism. This required a modification or revision, such that the socio-ethical questions and issues generated by the organization of society on modern values, (i.e. justice, rights, liberty, and equality) became the paramount questions required from Protestantism. In its effort to integrate with modernity's goals and needs, Protestantism became more anthropocentric and ethically oriented. It met modernity from a position, not over the human social process, but under, alongside, and relative to it. It saw itself as integral to the success of modernity's vision of socio-cultural advancement and the proper realization of its liberal and egalitarian values. As such, the biblical and dogmatic sources were revised relative to this posture and these interests. These sources were not framed in such a way that the human self encountered them as intrinsically authoritative but relative to modern individual and social values. A fundamental openness and malleability was required of Protestantism, regarding the use of its sources, so that it could be responsive to its times and the changes it presented. As shown, this relationship tended to erode the substantive difference of Protestantism.

The other form of "public" or "religious" Protestantism interfaced its religious resources with society in response to the perception that modernity did not have remaining within it that which would guarantee proper socio-moral boundaries. Morally, modernity was perceived as a runaway train. What it needed was religio-moral stability, fixity, "boundedness". Protestantism set about to provide this need for

fixity, eventually in concert with other religious traditions. As shown in Chapter 4(c), Protestantism shaped its religious sources into a more authoritative moral form and reached for political leverage to reassert particular values as the foundation upon which individual liberty could be enjoyed. Like the more liberal Protestantism just described, a "relativization" of Protestantism occurred in this phenomenon, and it is this fact which discloses the substantive claim presented here, that Protestantism was being given a religious form in answer to social exigencies. In both manifestations of "public" Protestantism just described, there is an explicit correlation of Protestantism to modernity with a corresponding reshaping of its sources to meet the perceived need. Formally, this has been described here as Protestantism's extension of itself beyond a discrete ecclesial form so as to be present to and connect with society in a religious form answerable to modernity's new needs and goals. Materially, the problem has been presented as one in which Protestantism's truth was abstracted and distorted in the process of rendering it relative to the modern situation. Both the formal and informal aspects of public Protestantism arose out of its close identification with America which commenced in colonial times and was transformed and deepened in the wake of the 1776 Revolution.

The problem of American Protestantism's identification with its world may be summarized in the following eight overlapping statements: (1) It has its roots in New England Puritanism's theological universalism and determinism which required society on "earth" to be formally divided and visibly connected to the sovereignty of "heaven." (2) The problem stems from colonial Puritanism's early passion to prove their religion by building a better society and to use liberal principles in that construction. Eventually, this vision for a superior liberal society was carried over to the new republic, which was destined to become a pluralistic secular entity. Protestantism was one of the parents of modernity and as such, it was inevitable that they would become closely attached to it. Although in this scenario, as is often the case in modern times, the single parent eventually became organized around the child. (3) The problem has its roots in the attempt to give Christianity a *direct religious*-public formation. This was inaugurated in the colonial period and given national expression after disestablishment in the nineteenth century. The revivalism that came with the second Great Awakening propelled Protestantism to cultural dominance. By the second third of the nineteenth century, Protestantism's cultural

predominance was so strong, that it was easy for it to conceive of and, to a degree, even establish its religio-moral tenets as the normative values and morals of the republic. The more dialectical engagement of religion with society represented by revivalism moved Protestantism to a new place and a new temptation – a non-dialectical establishment of its religious values viewed as constituitive of the republic – a "Christian republic." (4) It has roots in those optimistic impulses and theological developments which increasingly came to understand the Protestant religion from the standpoint of its power to effect *individual* and *social* change. Within this frame of reference, religion's practical, experiential, subjective and socially relevant aspects came to be emphasized and given priority. This allowed Protestantism to view itself as integral and complementary to the new world. It provided them a religious point of contact with the republican project of values. (5) The problem has its roots in a pessimistic view of human nature found in both Puritanism's division between the righteous and the wicked and republicanism's citizen elite. (6) It has roots in the growth of a rationalism, which on the one side, facilitated a critical revisionism rendering Christianity relative to modernity's values and goals; and on the other side, was enlisted to render Christianity more absolute and authoritative in answer to the new relativism. (7) The problem grows out of the pressures and attractions, which were endemic to the rise of the liberal modern world. These played a role in deepening Protestantism's identification with the modern world. This was manifested in Protestantism's attempt to both integrate its religious resources with modern freedom sharing its underlying optimism, and to mark the socio-moral limits of modern freedom as a complement necessary to offset the risk of socio-moral chaos inherent to freedom [i.e., to regulate the boundaries of freedom]. (8) The problem is also a practical problem having to do with the difficulty of negotiating a tension between maintaining the ecclesial integrity of Christianity and the social-worldly engagement of Christianity. Increasingly, Protestantism's interest in transforming the worldly secular realm was paid for by a weakening of the church as a discrete social world that embodied a different view and practice of reality.

From Identification to Differentiation

For Protestant bodies in the United States, this study suggests that escaping the patterns of uncritical identification and forming a proper differentiated connection to

the world is linked to the following:

1. A "Revolutionary" Versus a Religious Understanding of the Christian Gospel

The transposition of the gospel into religio-moral tenets and the attempt to join these to the individual or society is fundamentally a strategy to stabilize and improve the human condition.

The gospel, Barth and Niebuhr argued, is revolutionary. This revolution occurs when the human is brought into immediate relations to the Being of beings[3] to God as Lord, judge and savior; to God who in Christ on the cross indicts, condemns, rejects and destroys humanity as she is only to save humanity by giving her a new order of being in the resurrected Christ that fills the new age. The religion of the gospel turns the believer away from religious strategies calculated to save and improve the old humanity and old age to the already secured new age and new humanity that has broken into this world. True religion is to live in the power of the new and reflect and conform to its image. The attempt to forge a direct connection between the individual or social order and the so-called eternal laws of God authoritatively written in nature, or the statutes and morals authoritatively written in the Bible thereby providing stabilizing and ordering principles which the autonomous citizen can appropriate, effectively negates the revolution of Jesus Christ. The revolution of Jesus Christ does not place religion on a lend lease basis to assist modern society or individuals to underwrite their autonomous venture so it or they will be successful. Rather, it explodes the myth of security and autonomy and turns one out to the only source of security the living God who meets all as Lord in severity and kindness. As Niebuhr pointed out, "God" and so-called authoritative moral, religious and ecclesiastical principles can be conflated into one entity and given a static quality. Society or the individual then is brought into a direct relation to these. When this occurs, the revolution of God as Lord ceases to exist.

In the radical language of his *Romans II*, Barth wrote that Jesus comes "... not to improve the flesh through morality, to transfigure it through art, to rationalize it through science, to overcome it through the Fata Morga of religion, but to proclaim the resurrection of the flesh, the new human being who recognizes herself in God because she is made in God's image and in whom God recognizes Godself since God

is her pattern."[4]

Barth recognized that there existed a propensity to absolutize cultural conventions, familial, political and ecclesiastical institutions by grounding them in creation, natural law or the Bible. On these institutions there were often conferred a divine or eternal dignity and their persistence were often given religious soteriological importance and assistance. Barth recognized that the truth of the matter was that these institutions and conventions often structured evils and injustices and resisted revolution by ensuring a social stasis. This stasis was the seed bed for revolution. Over against revolution, Barth urged the revolution of God in Jesus Christ. The revolution of God in Christ attempts neither to tear down the old structure or improve it. It proclaims the birth of a new order and the impotency, death and terminis of the old. [For Barth, Christianity from A to Z was eschatological]. The logic of the gospel understood in this way accomplishes what revolution cannot. It relativizes the importance and status of these institutions. What is needed, Barth insisted, is a "devastating undermining of the existing order."[5] Summarizing Barth, Gorringe writes that this comes by depriving state, church, society, positive right, family, organized research - but also of course, revolutionary action, of their pathos."[6] "These things live off the credulity of those who have been nurtured upon vigorous sermons-delivered-on-the-field-of-battle, and solemn humbug of all sorts."[7] "If you stir up revolution against them, their pathos is provided with fresh fodder. Depriving them of pathos starves them out."[8] As Niebuhr pointed out, Protestantism in the United States has had two histories, one in which it has served the revolution of God, and the other in which it has served the interests and needs of modern society.

2. A "Self" Defining Versus a Complementary Relation to Society

The emancipation of society from the dominance of the church and the simultaneous idealization of society as a secular autonomous future making phenomenon, set the stage for the temptation of the church to organize itself around the world. The world in this setting is the so-called larger, more important historical project that emerged in the wake of the 1776 Revolution – the creation of liberal social order. The temptation was one of reinventing Christianity's public role by discerning some lack or deficit in the secular project which it alone could fill; a sort of God of the gaps.

The example of complementarity cited in the text was Protestantism's temperance campaign. Whisky imperiled the individualistic productive axis of democratic industrial society. That Protestantism stepped forward to provide complementary help to society is evident by the fact that "men were not saved from the frustration, conflict and poverty of life which they sought to escape in saloons; they were saved from whiskey." Bowen discerned that the willingness to place oneself in a complementary relation to others represents a failure to take up the challenge of defining oneself; that is, to be present to a situation in a way that has complete integrity to who one really is in themselves, not according to what others (or situation) seems to dictate or expect from them.

Transposed to a Christian setting, this is precisely the point Bonhoeffer made when he wrote: "Jesus concerns himself hardly at all with the solution of worldly problems."[9] "His word is not an answer to human questions and problems; it is the answer of God to the question of God to man. His word is essentially determined not from below but from above." [10] "The way of Jesus Christ... leads not from the world to God but from God to the world. This means that the essence of the gospel does not lie in the solution of human problems and the solution of human problems cannot be the essential task of the church."[11] "It [The Word] is not a solution but a redemption."[12] The origin of this word does not arise out of a preoccupation with a human dilemma defined as the disunion of a world split between good and evil, but the "unity of the Son with the Father's Will."[13] This word lies "Beyond" all human problems[14] and comes as a message of redemption. For Bonhoeffer, this does not mean that human problems are not given any resolution, but that resolution is found in a different "plane" or framework.[15] It is a matter not of the church being aloof from the world and its problems and evil. Rather, it is the point of departure from which these problems are encountered or addressed.[16]

This resistance to complementarity is also what Barth brought to light when he showed that in the gospel of Jesus Christ, God chose his own form of being present to humanity. The resurrection of the crucified Jesus is God's chosen meeting place with human beings. The church can do nothing other than seek to relate the world to the reality of Jesus Christ, not seek to relate Jesus Christ to the world.

When Niebuhr wrote the words describing liberalism which were to become renown, "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without

judgement through the ministrations of Christ without a cross." The problem was not in the first place a doctrinal one. It was born out of a Protestantism that had increasingly sought to maintain its public status by forging a religious complement to the modern rationalistic, autonomous world that was emerging.

3. A Realistic Versus Idealistic View of the Revolution of 1776

The Revolution of 1776 contained within it an idealism that was not only in tension with economic, political and ecclesiastical hierarchialism but with Christian soteriological and anthropological assumptions. The Enlightenment dream was one of attempting to give the values of individual liberty, equality, plurality and secularity (i.e., the direct affirmation of the value of the world as secular) a simple historical realization contingent only on citizen virtue and the use of reason. As shown, while Protestants in the eighteenth and nineteenth century did not envision such a republic (they wanted a Christian republic), this secular vision increasingly became the dominant public view with the slight modification that private piety helps support public virtue. The gospel, Bonhoeffer argued, does not support the Enlightenment optimism that these values have an independent absolute existence as eternal values grounded in creation. If this was the case, the Revolution of 1776 laid the building blocks for an ideal social human order. Protestants who remain differentiated from modernity, i.e., remain in touch with their distinctive Christian sourcing, will know that no such order can and will rise from such a foundation. Therefore they will resist the temptation to join their religion to the project.

In the new humanity born out of the revolution of God in Christ, these values do exist, albeit in a qualified and modified fashion. From the standpoint of God, the autonomous free individual does not exist as such. God is shown to be in a relationship to the individual as Lord. In this framework, the individual is affirmed as valuable, not by virtue of creation [what she is in herself], but by grace [i.e., what God is in Godself]. In the same way, in the new humanity which is the creation of God in Christ, there is no such thing as independent humanity. Humanity is a collective conception in which all are bound together in a covenant of love and forgiveness.

The attempt to baptize the values of individual liberty, equality, plurality and the secular as absolute independent goods ends in relativism, individualism, pluralism (social fragmentation) and secularism.

The temptation for Protestantism is on the one hand to forget the Enlightenment error of absolutizing values that are bred into the modern social experiment and become enamoured with this experiment as possessing future making significance. On the other hand, the temptation is that of attempting to absolutize conservative institutions and values [i.e., "family," gender roles and moral "principles" as if the eternal was embedded in creation] and attempting to secure the modern world by formally connecting it to these.

4. An Intentional Versus an "Emotional" Relation to Society

Relations are formed through interaction with existing pressures and pulls. The modern world which surrounds the churches exerts a pessimistic and optimistic "emotional" charge which tempts and pressures the churches. The pessimistic charge derives from the distortions created by modernity's liberal ethic. This ethic fosters individualism and social fragmentation which create a cultural longing for authoritarianism and top-down strategies to reclaim socio-moral stability and unanimity. By the same principle, modernity creates a positive or optimistic charge. Modernity defines humanness along the lines of individual development and autonomy; the right to define oneself, one's "values" and moral boundaries. This ethos eschews all religion that has the least taint or suspicion of heteronomy and accepts only that religion that supports autonomy and freedom.

The risk has been that Christian constituencies would be pulled into either this unfounded cultural optimism or the counter-cultural pessimism and shape their religion to be supportive of them instead of defining themselves in creative tension. Rightly understood, the gospel cannot be coopted for either of these. It cannot be reduced to authoritative religio-moral standards and it cannot be made into a religious experience for the realization of the free and autonomous individual or society. As shown, the objective and scriptural character of the Christian message wrongly understood can be exploited by transposing it into religio-moral tenets that are absolutely definable and authoritative. In this form, religion is easily exploitable by modern cultural forces seeking social stability. In a parallel manner, the subjective character of the Christian message can be exploited so as to create a bridge to an anthropocentric world enamoured with change and human development.

The gospel, Barth showed, certainly does not do away with the objective,

thereby opening the door to relativism; neither does it do away with a subjective experience. Both subjective experiences of God and objective statements of God are referred to the cross and resurrection and derive their contents [limits and horizons] ultimately from that center in which God has chosen to reveal Godself definitively. As Barth points out, the cross-resurrection is both a revelation and hiding of God. In this "objective" form, God is not unambiguously and statically present. Through the gospel and the Spirit, God reveals Godself as God and Lord in such a way that the human is in the grasp and use of God, not the other way around.

5. Maintain Versus Surrender the Tension Between the Universality of the Gospel and the Particularity of the Church

The universal categories of the Kingdom of God which captured the imagination of the Puritans and nineteenth century evangelicals gave them their "this worldly" focus. The problem with their universalism was that they tended to idealize, if not equate, the "Kingdom of God in Christ" with their social, national, political or ecclesiastical endeavors while losing sight of the importance of the particularity of the church. The challenge for the church is to live in the critical tension that insists *all* human formulations to be under the gracious rule of God that has come near in Christ and the sober realization that no human formulation fully embodies that reality and can never be equated with it. If the church relinquishes the "this worldly" universal horizons of the gospel, it licenses a Christianity world separatism (i.e., a public-private dualism which agrees to the legitimate autonomy of a modern Enlightenment premised society and a private sphere for the reign of Christ). If it naively proposes a realization of the universal or proposes a stable union of the so-called principles of the universal to any human formulation, it is in tension with the advancement of the Kingdom of God in the world and forfeits the basis of its distinct particularity.

As shown, the temptation of Protestants to forge a direct connection between their religio-moral tenets and society, thereby making it "Christian," has a long history in the United States. It began with Puritan efforts to abstract Christian religion from its ecclesial setting and introduce it directly into society to build it and maintain its order. The idea that America was a Christian nation received special attention in the wake of disestablishment when it appeared Protestantism faced a private versus public role. It was revived in the middle of this century by early right wing Christian political

militants such as Carl McIntire, Robert Welch and George Wallace. It became a major theme and campaign in the 1970's, 80's and early 90's by the Moral Majority, which was begun by the covert union of Jerry Falwell and Ronald Reagan Cabinet members and was perpetuated by Pat Robertson, Ralph Reed and the Christian Coalition. It has received a major apologetic by David Barton as well as Gary Baurer, author and director of the Family Research Institute and presidential hopeful for the year 2000.

This entire project for a "Christian" America stands under the censure of the gospel. It is, as Bonhoeffer pointed out, an effort to divide what God has joined together in Jesus Christ. It divides law and gospel; religio-moral imperative from grace, with the aim of binding liberal society to the former while reserving the latter for the fellowship of the saints.

The church, understood as a community and institution, is a particular response to the new universal human reality that has come into the open in Jesus Christ. All the church can properly do and must do is be faithful to the universal truth that precedes and transcends it. Its existence is summed up in the vocation of witnessing to this universal truth and conforming to it. Both of these involve mission and fellowship.

The church and the world are not ontologically different. Because of its belief in the gospel, the church witnesses to the world that (A) all humanity is in the grip of a messianic destiny brought into the open through Jesus and (B) that the world, like itself, must not organize itself in variance with this destiny.

The church can make no *unique* claims about itself, its prerogative regarding truth and religious authority in the world. It can never be more than a company of believers bearing witness to a truth they know only through the Spirit and the Apostles to be universal. If the church could claim more for itself, it could justify either separating from the "evil" world or presiding over the world as a bearer of religio-moral norms.

As shown, Paul rendered Christianity's distinctivity vulnerable to the corrosive effects of the world when he challenged the universality of ecclesial claims uniquely tied to Judaism; holy men, holy places, holy times, holy rituals and holy foods. At times when Judaism was threatened by assimilation into an encroaching culture, it could and did exploit religious taboo to create social insularity, thereby protecting its integrity. The price it paid for this was an intensified parochialism, the seed bed for

anti-Semitism. Christianity's only proper resource to resist assimilation is to strengthen its particularity; a particularity that is built entirely from its response and witness to the universal that has made its debut in Christ. Any other path to building its particularity will conclude in a parochialism (that breeds dualism) or an ecclesiastical arrogance that breeds religious hegemony.

The post-Erastian, post-Constantinian period returns Christianity to the original challenge born out of Pauline desacrilization. It must derive its integrity "spiritually" (versus the flesh, cf. Galatians 3:3) i.e., conformity to the universal faith of Abraham.

Both Niebuhr and Barth understood that the church and the world are not fundamentally different, only functionally different.

> "Though it sounds paradoxical," wrote H. Richard Niebuhr, "it seems nevertheless to be true that the important difference between the Church and the world is that the church knows itself to be the 'world' before God while the world does not know this but thinks that it can be like God. Perhaps it's better to say that the church consists of that portion of humanity which, knowing God, knows that man is not God and has made the decision before God that it will not play God but let God be Lord."[17]

> Barth wrote that "the church is not set over against the world; it is the world conscious of its need, the place where the sickness of the world comes to a head and therefore hope for all is included in hope for the church."[18]

As pointed out, Bonhoeffer equally argues for the church and the world's underlying commonality derived from a redemption [versus creation] premise. This underlying unity radically applied, guarantees that the church will neither separate from or attempt to preside over the world, but remain alongside it as a witness to *humanity's* true calling and destiny. Understood in its full radicality, this suggests that American Evangelicals need to shift their emphasis to what God *has done* for *all humanity* in Christ, not what He *is doing* for a select few; "what He is doing for me and can do for you if you choose to believe, repent and invite the Holy Spirit into your life."

6. A Confessional Versus Apologetic Witness of the Church to the World

When Protestantism took upon itself the challenge of demonstrating to the world the empirical and rational logos of its faith, it was attempting to demonstrate

that it shared common epistlemogical ground with the modern world that was emerging. By taking upon itself the task of communicating its convictions through apologetical argument, it was in effect assuming a part of the burden and responsibility for the reception of their message that did not belong to them. The irony is that this effort is rarely awarded by the world taking the church more seriously. Confession on the other hand, is a form of speech (or action) that is derived not from common ground, i.e., common warrants, but belief which stems from being grasped by the revelation of God ["I believe, therefore I speak"[19]]. Such speech is arresting, disturbing and unwelcome. Because it is grounded in conviction, it creates an uneasiness in the other. Replying to Brunner who urged that the church meet communism with well developed arguments exposing its error, Barth insisted that no apologetical attack was called for. The church need only stay focused on its offensive vision and confess that in contrast to communism's vision. If the time did come when communism needed confronting, Barth insisted that "... we shall then profit more from the first article of the Declaration of Barmen than from your knowledge of the objectionableness of totalitarianism."[20]

Discovering the power of a confessional relation to the world is one of the cures for "fixity" and "freedom."

7. A Responsive Versus a Programmatic View of Social Change

As shown in this study, Protestantism in America has a long history of being enamoured with its role in social change. This is shown by the Puritan New England theocracy, nineteenth century evangelical social reforms, the social gospel movement and the Religious Right. The problem has been with their view of change. It has largely been programmatic.

Bowen has shown that the difference authentically embodied in the other who remains non-anxiously connected to a diseased situation, is the primary resource to affect (not effect) change. The presence of this connection is passionate love. Differentiation properly embodied is the presence of truth. It is when evil (i.e., sin or destructive patterns) is exposed to this formulation, that it is most likely to lose its power, since it does not possess an ontological permanence.

Niebuhr said that Barth salvaged the social gospel mission which could not be carried forward on the principles it espoused.[21] The movement was activist and

teleological and led no where but to a future of human making. Summarizing Barth, Niebuhr writes that the Kingdom of God utters a radical no "in response to man's petition, 'Let my kingdom of liberty, fraternity and equality come.'"[22]

The first step of true change is a negative step, not a direct employment of power to effect change. Change is first and foremost conditioned on the presence of radical difference that contains within it a negation of the intrinsic validity of non-being [i.e., sin, evil, destructive patterns]. Exposing non-being as non-being is a dialectical possibility that is grounded in God's act in Christ. The primary movement in historical change occurs when human formulations are exposed to the gospel and respond.

H.R. Niebuhr writes that

> "The meaning of 'Kingdom of God' and 'eschatology' in Barthianism is to be understood, then from the point of view of the central doctrine that God acts, and first of all in this way, that God's action is negative – the denial of human action with its purposes. So approached, all the concepts of Christian theology have a purely negative content. Eternity is Not-Time; Kingdom of God is Not-Kingdom-of-man; Salvation is not-conservation..."

He goes on to address the proper sphere of human action.

> "Christian action is to be understood not as parallel to divine action in the common striving after a common telos, nor as counter-action to God's action, but as response to the divine activity which precedes, accompanies and awaits human action in history.[23]

8. Secure its Place in the World Through the Relevance of the Word Versus the Relevance of Churchly Authority and Status

Bonhoeffer argues that the Church must seek to hear the word of God regarding the subtle formation of sin which is peculiar to a particular age. To ensure its place in society, it cannot rest on either its orthodox claims or on the merit of the practical benefits it renders to society. Neither can it rest on its right to exist, right understood as that grant ensured by liberal government that guarantees the freedom of a given religion to express itself and practice its faith. Rather, the church must go into the wilderness, as Niebuhr suggests (or to the "mountain" as Bonhoeffer writes) and wait on God and the gospel to hear with fresh clarity and relevance God's word to its particular world. It is in this clarification and in a dialectical engagement of this clarity

with its world that the church establishes its place in the world. Religious freedom, Bonhoeffer is clear, is nothing in and of itself. The gospel alone guarantees the church's relevance and place in the world by penetrating the lie of a given age.

Viewed in this light, the Religious Right's attempt to "save America" by formally linking it to religio-moral standards is simply a cheap substitute, an unacceptable short cut which attempts to escape the discipline of the Spirit which requires the church to return to the gospel until it hears the truth with sufficient clarity that it is able to "save people from the world." The Left is equally flawed. It has often chosen to talk in language of abstract liberty, equality and rights as if these were ends in themselves and led to human social betterment. The Religious Left has often presented itself to the world in a mock Constantinian form pontificating on what is right and wrong in society. As Franklin Littell has written, "We [U.S. Protestants] have even more councils of bishops, synods and assemblies that when they pass resolutions, sometimes sound as though they were members of the old House of Lords or Princes of the Realm. When they do speak, their words sound 'moralistic' – that is, presumptive of a status, authority, and constituency that no longer obtains."[24]

Concluding Remarks

The movement from problematic identification to the more vulnerable and tension filled relation to society described by the term differentiation, is of course a generation to generation, decade to decade challenge. Nevertheless, this study has shown that patterns of identification ("fixity" and "freedom") are deeply rooted in segments of mainstream Protestantism in America. From the earliest colonial beginnings to the present, these patterns have been fostered and developed in one form or another. This fact urges forward the conclusion that much of Protestantism in the United States, conservative or liberal, still has not fully come to grips with the perpetuity of this historic problem or the change in direction that is needed.

Even so, it is likely that the problematic identity between Protestant bodies and America manifested in efforts to connect their religion to society through integrative and regulative strategies, have both reached their high water mark in this century. By 1930's, Protestantism's interest in integrating its religion into the unfolding 1776 socio-cultural project organized around rational, democratic and individual values, had crested. The recent splitting of ideological and fiscal conservatives in the

Republican Party and the changing rhetoric of Ralph Reed, who began to soften the militant position of the Christian Coalition, eventually to resign as director late in this decade, sent a signal that the twenty-five year campaign to relink the United States to nineteenth century religio-moral values, had also crested. The playing out of the strength of these strategies, although they are not completely spent, suggests that the time may be right for clarifying what a dialectical connection with society consists and deepening and broadening support for it among Protestants. H. Richard Niebuhr summarized this challenge when he wrote,

> "How to be in the world and yet not of the world has always been the problem of the church... hence the church's strategy always has a dual character and the dualism is in constant danger of being resolved into the monism of other worldliness or if this worldliness, into a more or less quiescent expectancy of a revolution beyond time or a mere reform program carried on in terms of the existent order."[25]

Endnotes

1. "Martin Marty talks of two revolutions, the first an inward and spiritual one that made American religion evangelical (i.e., the great awakenings), and the second, an outward and political one that made American society republican (i.e., the American Revolution)." *The Evangelical Tradition in America*, Leonard Sweet, Edit. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer Press, 1984), p. 11 (taken from Chapter One by same name, authored by Sweet).

2. It is interesting to note, as Richard Marsden points out, specifying scripture as inerrant as a test, is rare before the late nineteenth century. See *Variety of American Evangelicalism*, Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, Chapter Three, "Fundamentalism and American Evangelicalism," (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee, 1991), p. 27.

3. See Chapter 7, Section D, p. 384, this thesis.

4. Timothy Gorringe, *God's Revolution*, p. 25; Barth, *Roman II,* English Translation, p. 277.

5. Barth, *Roman II*, p. 467, ET p. 483. Gorringe, p. 28.

6. Gorringe, p. 28.

7. Barth, *Roman II*, p. 467, ET p. 483. Gorringe, p. 28.

8. Gorringe, p. 28.

9. Ibid., p. 355

10. Ibid., p. 355

11. Ibid., p. 356

12. Ibid., p. 355

13. Ibid., p. 355

14. Ibid., p. 355

15. Ibid., p. 356

16. Ibid., p. 357

17. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Theology, History and Culture: Major Unpublished Writings*, W.S. Johnson, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996) p. 72.

18. Paraphrased by Timothy Gorringe in a yet unpublished manuscript on Karl Barth, *God's Revolution*, p. 26 & 27. See Barth's *Romans II*, English Translation, p. 407.

19. II Corinthians, 3.

20. "Barth and Brunner, A Correspondence," *Religion from Tolstoy to Camus*, ed. Walter Kaufman (London, UK: Transaction Publisher, 1994). P. 365.

21. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Theology, History and Culture*, p. 122.

22. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Theology, History and Culture,* p. 121.

23. Ibid., 120-121.

24.Franklin H. Littell, "The Churches and the Body Politic," *Religion in America*, William McLoughlin and Robert Bellah, ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968) p. 37.

25. Niebuhr, *Church Against The World,* p. 618.

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